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NEW
IN '25

**Chukar
Challenge**

**Bowhunting
BLACKTAILS**

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- **Last Call** *for* **Ducks**
- **Coyotes** *in the* **Cold**
- **Avian Flu Update**

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IT'S SHOWTIME



★ BIG GAME ROOM

- LEGENDS OF THE OREGON RECORD BOOK
- 2025 TOUR OF NORTHWEST BIG GAME
- 2025 HEAD & HORNS COMPETITION



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SUN 9am-3pm

29th annual Douglas County
SPORTSMEN'S & OUTDOOR RECREATION SHOW

FEB. 7-9, 2025
DOUGLAS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
ROSEBURG, OR
FRI 12-9pm • SAT 10am-8pm
SUN 10am-5pm

25th annual Jackson County
SPORTSMEN'S & OUTDOOR RECREATION SHOW

FEB. 21-23, 2025
JACKSON COUNTY EXPO
MEDFORD, OR
FRI 12-9pm • SAT 10am-8pm
SUN 10am-5pm

39th annual Shasta County
NORCAL BOAT, SPORT & RV SHOW

FEB. 28-MAR. 2, 2025
SHASTA DISTRICT FAIRGROUNDS
ANDERSON, CA
FRI 12-7pm • SAT 10am-7pm
SUN 10am-5pm

2nd annual Klamath County
SPORTSMEN'S & OUTDOOR RECREATION SHOW

MAR. 14-16, 2025
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FINDING DIRECTION

BY AMY PATRICK, OHA POLICY DIRECTOR

Election a mixed bag for hunters

The 2024 election is over, and the political ads have thankfully ceased, but the question remains: how did Oregon, and more specifically the sportsmen and women of Oregon, fare in the outcome? Depending on the state or federal outlook, there's no clear answer.

In the state legislature, there will be 18 new legislators in Salem when the 2025 legislative session opens in January.

Senate Democrats flipped a previously Republican seat to put the Democrats back into a super majority control of the chamber.

In a similar move, House Democrats secured a super majority by flipping the formerly Republican seat from District 22. This race was decided on a narrow margin of 161 votes, and while the results have been certified by the Secretary of State, the outcome may be challenged. The balance of incoming legislators is relatively even, with 10 joining the House of Representatives, while the remaining eight will take their place in the Senate.

While the legislative turnover was lower than in previous years and Republicans withstood several close races, the reality of the 2025 legislative session is that any concept brought forward by OHA or our allies must have bipartisan support to be viable.

The state revenue forecasts reflect growth in a healthy economy, but that does not translate into spendable dollars for the legislature. The outlook for the 2025 session is one of constriction, rather than expansion, when it comes to monies available from the General Fund. The result is that many good policy bills may not be successful if they contain a funding request.

On the federal front, there is potential for expanded opportunity for hunters, anglers, and recreationalists. As President Trump's cabinet continues to fill, we will begin to get a sense of this opportunity as it relates to the Endangered Species Act, most closely linked to the ongoing saga around the listing of the gray wolf, as well as potential gains around public access, non-lead ammunition requirements, and land management practices.

Another federal level issue that hunters should monitor is the civil court case related to hunters and trespass claims due to corner crossings. This case, which originated in Wyoming, is the result of a criminal trespass case in which the hunters were ultimately found not guilty of trespass when they used an A-frame ladder to cross from one corner of public land to another without setting foot on private property. The civil case brought against the hunters by the landowner is currently being heard in the Tenth Circuit Court and will likely end up before the U.S. Supreme Court. The recent election of President Trump may have an impact on the corner crossing issue due to his potential opportunity to appoint two judges to the Supreme Court in his next term.

At the state level, the election outcome brings little tangible change. The legislature remains in a Democratic majority in both chambers, which will continue to require bipartisan efforts for successful legislation, but this is not a new landscape for us to traverse. The federal level offers the most change with both upheaval and opportunity for the sportsmen's community. OHA will continue to work tirelessly at the state level as the only hunting organization with a lobbyist in the Capitol and also engage on the federal level to maximize opportunities for Oregon hunters.

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WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

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KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

1. Which of the following typically have bifurcated antlers?

- a) blacktail c) Roosevelt elk
- b) whitetail d) Rocky Mtn. elk

2. Which bird is known as a "Hun?"

- a) chukar c) collared dove
- b) coot d) gray partridge

3. Which drake has a reddish-brown head?

- a) wigeon c) canvasback
- b) scaup d) bufflehead

4. Which plant is known as buck brush?

- a) current berry c) ceanothus
- b) service berry d) salal

5. The feet of a bandtail pigeon are:

- a) black c) orange
- b) pink d) yellow

6. Which introduced bird was not wild about western Oregon?

- a) eastern turkey c) red-legged partridge
- b) Sichuan pheasant d) all of the above

7. The Warner Unit is in which county?

- a) Klamath c) Harney
- b) Lake d) Malheur

8. You can use dogs to hunt:

- a) Fall turkey c) bobcat
- b) Gray squirrel d) all of the above

9. You can use an artificial light to hunt:

- a) bear c) bobcat
- b) cougar d) none of the above

10. Which has only four "frontal" toes?

- a) bear c) raccoon
- b) coyote d) in-laws



Identify this sparkling lake in Cascade elk country, be drawn from all correct entries, and win a Work Sharp Original Knife and Tool Sharpener!

Send your guess to Oregon Hunting Quiz, OHA, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, or submit your guess at oregonhunters.org, where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

ENTRY DEADLINE: JAN. 15, 2025.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Schylar Gorman, Medford

Schylar's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified Denman Wildlife Area.

JANUARY 1

2025 license needed; Cougar season opens

JANUARY 4

Tualatin River NWR youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 11

Sauvie Island youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 16

NW goose season 2nd period ends

JANUARY 18

Klamath PLAY Outdoors, 541-891-3501

JANUARY 26

Duck season & most goose seasons end

JANUARY 31

Harvest reporting deadline, most tags;
Most upland bird seasons end;
Eugene Sportsmen's & Outdoor Show opens

FEBRUARY 1

Veterans & active military waterfowl day

FEBRUARY 7

Douglas County Sportsmen's & Outdoor
Recreation Show opens;
Willamette Sportsman Show opens, Albany

FEBRUARY 8

NW 3rd goose season opens

FEBRUARY 10

Deadline to apply for spring bear tags

FEBRUARY 12

Pacific NWSportsmen's Show opens, Portland

FEBRUARY 15

OHA Ochoco Banquet 541-410-5050

FEBRUARY 20

Spring bear draw results available

FEBRUARY 21

Jackson County Sportsmen's & Outdoor
Recreation Show opens

FEBRUARY 22

OHA chapter banquets:
Redmond 541-419-7215 with A&H
statewide deer tag auction;
Hoodview 503-314-3090

ANSWERS: 1-a; 2-d; 3-c; 4-c; 5-d; 6-d; 7-b; 8-d; 9-c; 10-b.



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OREGON AFIELD

DARRELL AUJUL

Take a bead on late valley ducks

The past few years have been like the good old days when it comes to late-season puddle duck hunting in the Willamette Valley. Being prepared to fool the influx of late-arriving birds is the key.

Wigeon are among the most abundant this time of year, but they can be edgy because they've been pressured. I've had great success the past three years running only a dozen floating wigeon decoys, then scattering five dozen or more Big Al's silhouette wigeon decoys along water's edge and on shore. Silhouettes are a fast, easy way to expand a decoy spread.

Mallards have been more prevalent in many places in the valley, probably due



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Duck hunting can be exceptional in the last weeks of the season, but these birds are educated, and hunters must pay attention to details.

to the growing filbert orchards. Not only do more mallards seem to be wintering here, but early arriving ducks are sticking around rather than pushing south. Rivers, ponds, and even skinny creeks are great places to target mallards as they return to rest early in the morning. Flooded fields and sloughs are prime locations to focus on mallard feeding areas. Fully flocked decoys like those from Final Approach can work wonders on educated mallards.

Pintails and shovelers are also dropping into the valley. For these, increase the amount of white in your spread. Adding

more drake pintail and Northern shoveler decoys will pull in these birds, as well as other species. Contrast in a decoy spread is a big bonus in the late season.

I pull out the wind-aided spinning decoys this time of year, keeping a jerk cord spinner out. Tone down the wing flaps, slowly spinning them just enough to capture the eyes of distant ducks. Jerk cord swimming rigs from Motion Ducks are tough to beat this time of year. Pay attention to detail and make changes, accordingly, because the little things matter in the late season. —SCOTT HAUGEN



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Spend 20 minutes at a call set, then move a couple miles and set up again. A pair of hunters can make about eight call sets in a day.

Expect more desert dogs in the desert

“Don’t be surprised if you see coyotes roaming through Portland.” This was the lead sentence in a story I read from KATU in October titled *Expect to see more coyotes in Portland this season*.

In fact, we should expect to see coyotes wherever we go. Scuttlebutt from deer season was hunters were seeing fewer deer, more rabbits and more coyotes (and bigger coyotes) than they had in years. If rabbit numbers are up, we can infer coyote numbers are on the increase, too.

As we pass the top of a rabbit cycle and the numbers of lagomorphs lag, then our fuzzy friend the coyote boogies down the buffet line to target deer, antelope, elk calves and baby beeves.

There is no time like the present to make a preemptive strike to alleviate pressure on our ungulates.

It’s winter. It’s time to hunt coyotes. Plan to spend 20 minutes at each call

set, moving about two miles and setting up again. On a good day a pair of hunters can make eight call sets, which should result in several shot opportunities. Better than one day of coyote hunting is two days of coyote hunting. There are a number of small motels, bed and breakfasts and hot spring hostels who are more than happy to host coyote hunters on overnights in January.

Take a gander at the weather forecast first. Some days are better than others.

Overcast days with a steady barometer are prime for calling coyotes.

Look at units with a high percentage of public land where deer and antelope spend the winter months. Consider the Wagontire Unit (85% public), Fort Rock (65% public), Interstate (56% public), or Silver Lake (60% public). Wherever deer and antelope scratch out a living betwixt Fields, Fort Rock and Milton-Freewater, expect to see more coyotes this season. —GARY LEWIS

Look at units with a good amount of public land where deer and antelope spend the winter months.



Avian influenza spikes in Oregon

Recently ODFW reported a new spike in avian flu. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been around, but unlike previous outbreaks, this strain (H5N1) didn't disappear in spring and continues to change and circulate and has infected backyard poultry flocks, dairy herds and other livestock, including pigs, in Oregon. It has also infected farm workers in at least 14 states.

Unlike previous outbreaks, this strain (H5N1) didn't disappear in spring and continues to change and circulate.

Waterfowl are natural hosts, but dabblers are typically carriers. Mortality occurs mostly in cackling geese, especially juveniles without immunity. Recent cases are in the Willamette Valley and flocks that congregate in the northwest. They exhibit the full range of symptoms up to death.

HPAI is unrelated to the botulism die-off reported earlier this summer at Klamath. It's a different disease. ODFW Waterfowl Coordinator Brandon Reishus said HPAI was there early-on, mostly killing nesting grebes. Botulism followed. He is still not aware of any die-offs on the Oregon side, but some 75,000 birds died in the Tule Lake refuge. The concern is dense flocks in NW Oregon.

"We now have three years of experience with HPAI and there's a pattern," he said. Geese are affected after the first wave of migration and the disease runs its course mid-November and trails off.

Humans appear to be at low risk (www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/virus-transmission/avian-in-humans.html). Dairy-cow-to-human transmissions have resulted in only minor sicknesses here and zero deaths, although it has been deadly in Asia.

For what to do if you encounter sick or dead birds and a list of precautions, review the entirety of the ODFW press release at: www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2024/10_Oct/103124.asp

—JASON HALEY



SCOTT HAUGEN

Avian flu mortality occurs mainly in cackling Canada geese, especially juveniles without immunity.

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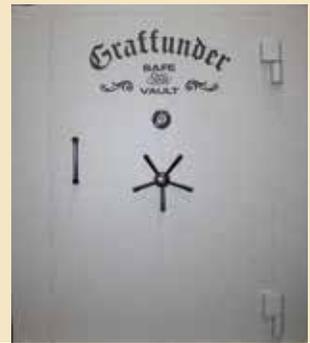


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JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Dems gain super majorities in legislature

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director
Amy@oregonhunters.org

The 2024 election is over and brought a few surprises on the national level, but less so at the state level. In the state legislature, there will be 18 new legislators headed to Salem in January when the 2025 legislative session gets underway.

The Senate had a high percentage of turnover, due in part to the Republican Senators who were not eligible for re-election because of their 2023 walk-out absences. Of the eight new legislators elected, one of them flipped a previously Republican seat to put the Democrats back into a super majority control of the chamber.

**Any OHA bill
will require
bipartisan
support**

As of this writing, 10 new Representatives will join the House, including one who narrowly flipped a Republican seat to create a Democratic super majority.

On the federal front, a second term for President Trump's administration could mean opportunity on topics such as delisting the gray wolf. The potential appointment of North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum prioritizes an emphasis on energy originating in the U.S., a potential boon for the economy, but those efforts may be coupled with impacts on public land and conservation efforts.

Firearms owners could also see federal level benefits with the new administration,

although historically President Trump has been mixed on regulations around gun control. However, during the lead-up to the election, President Trump specifically discussed expanding concealed carry opportunities.

At the state level, the legislature remains in a Democratic majority, which is not a new landscape for us to traverse. The federal level offers the most potential for change with both expanded opportunities and conservation challenges for the sportsmen's community. OHA will continue to work tirelessly at the state level as the only hunting organization with a lobbyist in the Capitol, and engage at the federal level to maximize opportunities for Oregon's sportsmen and women.

OHA eyes key bills in 2025 legislature

The 2025 legislative session is approaching, and while it's too early for a complete list of issues OHA will be engaging, there are a few we're already watching.

★ **Agency Budgets:** OHA will work primarily on the ODFW budget, and the proposed rate increase. Additionally, the budgets for the Oregon State Police, specific to fish & wildlife enforcement and poaching, and the Oregon Department of Transportation, specific to wildlife crossings, will round out our support efforts for agency budgets.

★ **Energy Siting:** OHA remains vigilant regarding reduced or changed regulations for siting of renewable energy projects, specifically regarding potential impacts to wildlife and habitat.

★ **Wildlife Issues:** Bills related to wildlife stewardship, predator management, and landowner compensation issues will be issues OHA closely follows. —AMY PATRICK

New Commissioner appointed

Dallas Hall Defrees is the newest appointee to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. Dallas resides in Baker City and is a fifth-generation rancher. She holds a master's degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management, has worked as the Sage-Grouse Coordinator in Baker County, and is the Regenerative Ranching Program Director for Sustainable Northwest.

This appointment by Governor Kotek, which was confirmed by the state senate during the September legislative days, fills the vacant seat for the Eastern Oregon Region.

Her term runs through September 2028.

The Eastern Oregon Region position is a result of the work OHA did in the 2023 legislative session on HB 3086 to reform the Commission by changing the appointment regions from congressional districts to river basin management areas. The new regions lessen the impact of Portland-centric Commission appointments while ensuring greater representation to the eastern portion of the state.

OHA staff has already met with the new Commissioner to introduce our organization, our mission, and our priorities. Her first meeting as a Commissioner was in December. —AMY PATRICK

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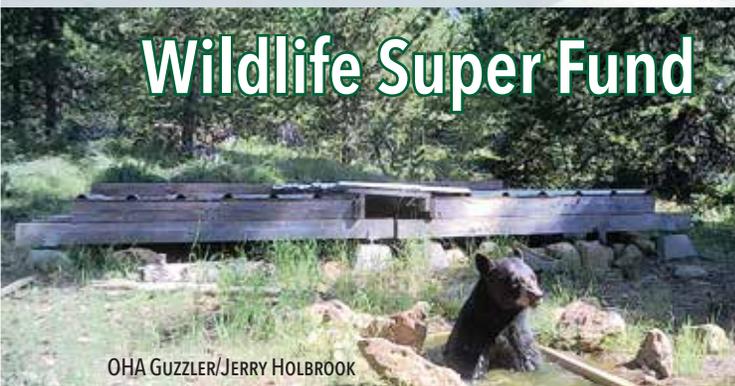
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Hunters' Victory Fund

Your tax-deductible* donation to the Oregon Hunters Association Hunters' Victory Fund will be dedicated for fighting legal and legislative battles to protect hunting rights in Oregon. Petitioners are gathering signatures to place a ban on hunting, trapping and fishing on Oregon's ballot! In the coming months we face legislative challenges where we must fight to protect your right to hunt, trap and own firearms!



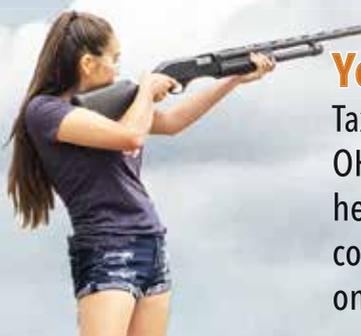
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Youth Heritage Fund

Tax-deductible* donations to OHA's Youth Heritage Fund help train tomorrow's hunters & conservationists who will carry on our proud hunting heritage.

Oregon Hunters Association Special Funds Donations

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TRADITIONS

By CLINTON EPPS



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Antlerless hunt proves anything but effortless

Sometimes a hunt teaches a series of lessons

My daughter drew the youth antlerless deer tag for the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge near Boardman in 2024. She'd eyed that hunt for years because it's shotgun or muzzleloader only, not hard to draw, and she likes muzzleloaders. Beyond that, other than noticing that the buck hunt was surprisingly popular (1,852 applicants for 3 tags!), we did no other research before applying. Lesson 1: do more research.

Before the season in late August, we investigated the website for the refuge and inspected their online map, noting an area in the northwestern quadrant labeled "deer hunting only." It's an odd landscape. The hunt area is bounded by huge agricultural pivots on and off refuge, the Columbia River, and sections managed for waterfowl. Feeling uncertain about the hunt rules, I called the refuge twice. They could tell me almost nothing, other than reassuring me that the marked area on their map was indeed the hunt area. It looked like about 500 acres, mostly open, with two wooded riparian draws and trees bordering the river. Nine youth tags, a 5-day season, in this little patch?

We drove to Boardman and did a quick scout the day before the opener. Grim. Little sign in our initial foray, just some dry pellets and old bones. The area had clearly burned years before, replacing sage brush with cheat grass. That evening we finally remembered to examine past hunter success rates. In 2023, only 3 kids bothered to hunt and just one doe was taken. The two adult antlerless seasons, and even the coveted buck hunt, yielded 0-2 deer per season. Oops. Lesson 2.

We rose at 03:30. Dawn found us at the head of a promising draw. A forked horn slipped behind us at 90 yards. We still-hunted a patch of tall remnant sage, then skirted the dense thorn of the wooded draws, waving at another pair of hunters. Creeping along a game trail through tangles of logs, aiming for a small clearing, I froze. "There!"

Lillie knelt, rifle poised. At 40 yards was a doe – standing directly in front of an enormous buck. A spike and a 4-point crowded her from either side. No shot.

An evening return yielded no further sightings. Next dawn found us still-hunting the edge of the riverine woods, when I spotted deer moving in the open at 800 yards. Tall antlers. Maybe

The author built the flintlock used by his daughter Lillie to be a scaled-down version of a rifle made in Virginia in the 1760s by Adam Haymaker.

a doe would join? We clawed through a horribly dense thicket and crept forward to cut off their likely path. Lillie low-crawled the last yards with her long .45 flintlock cradled under her body, me behind, until antler tips appeared above the grass. Then five bucks, two of them huge, trotted past her leveled rifle at 40 yards. Creeping forward yielded crashing in the brush and three more bucks disappearing over a low ridge, then a boy with a shotgun sitting under a nearby tree.

Another break, and debate. Worth continuing? 500 acres of mostly cheat grass, at least four hunting parties, 13 buck sightings, one doe, and one doe tag. The exact reversal of the usual scenario. Ridiculous. But entertaining.

Late afternoon found us posted near the head of the same draw, perched on a natural dyke in the sagebrush. Lillie sat with her rifle on shooting sticks. I quietly read amusing bits of Ruark's "Old Man and the Boy" to her and kept an eye on the brushline.

A single doe stepped out at 75 yards, raised her head, then trotted directly towards us. Lillie cocked and traversed her flintlock. The doe paused at 60 yards, only her head and neck showing above the swale.

"Should I do this?"

"Your call."

The rifle cracked and the doe bawled and dropped in her tracks, shot through the neck and lungs. Lesson 3: make sure your kid can shoot. That, at least, I'd already learned.

I subsequently called ODFW. The biologist confirmed my suspicion that this hunt was intended to address agricultural damage complaints, but patterns have changed and mule deer numbers there are down. "We had fun, but what an odd little hunt," I told him. "Such a small area, not sure it was safe."

The full picture emerged a week after the season ended, when a letter from ODFW arrived telling Lillie about her "upcoming" hunt, with a map showing that the hunt zone included nearly the entire refuge, despite the misleading USFWS map. Lesson 4? Call ODFW first.



Clint Epps has hunted with muzzleloaders since age 15, builds flintlocks, and is a wildlife biologist at Oregon State University.

**13 bucks,
one doe, and
one doe tag.
Ridiculous.
But entertaining.**





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HARD-WON BLACKTAIL

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With less than five minutes of shooting light left, movement on the hillside caught my eye. Looking through a narrow window in the ground blind, a blacktail doe was coming down a trail. Two strides later the doe was engulfed in briars.

Pleading a buck to be on her tail, I stayed in the bins. Seconds later the back of a big, dark deer slipped through the same opening. Its head was down and I couldn't see antlers, but the rhythmical stride left no doubt it was a buck.

My quest for a big three-point blacktail began two years prior, when it popped up on trail camera in mid-November. It was a big-bodied mature buck, one I suspected would always be a 3x3. I bowhunted it hard that season in the Cascade foothills overlooking the McKenzie River Valley.

I hunted early in the morning and until dark. I tried spot-and-stalk, rattling, and calling, and sat in tree stands and ground blinds. I never saw the buck, but continued amassing nighttime photos of it on trail cameras spanning a one-mile-wide by three-mile-long ridge.

In January the buck left, but reappeared on trail cameras in August, when it was still in velvet. The day after it stripped its velvet, the buck showed up on one trail camera. I hunted that buck in the early archery season and all of the late season. I never saw it one time, but got hundreds of trail camera shots of it, all at night.

In early July the buck was back on trail camera. I caught it on multiple cameras all summer. Cracking the blacktail code is tough, sometimes impossible. No animal I've hunted has honed my skills and humbled me more than a mature blacktail.

I failed to see the buck in the early archery season. By the time the late season rolled around, I was rejuvenated. I tried pushing deeper to where I thought its core area to be, but had no luck, no matter what I tried. Yet, it regularly appeared on trail cameras.

Then, the day before Thanksgiving, the buck showed up on trail camera. It was following a doe down a main trail, one I'd only caught the buck on a few times. By the time the deer reached a tiny meadow where the doe was feeding, it was dark. On Thanksgiving morning, I took a ground blind atop a ridge where the trail came out of a stand of 40-year-old timber. That's where the doe, being followed by a buck, appeared late in the afternoon, and they were headed toward my blind.

They still had 75 yards before reaching me. I hoped the buck would keep pushing, otherwise I'd run out of daylight. When the doe slithered from the briars, 40 yards from the blind, I raised my



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

The author captured this buck many times on trail camera, but saw it only once in three seasons of hunting the elusive recluse.

I had over 1,100 trail camera pictures of the grand buck, logged over 125 hours hunting it for over three seasons, and for one fleeting moment, laid eyes on it.

binoculars. In that instant the giant bodied three point filled the lens. It took my breath away. It was the first time I'd laid eyes on it. It was bigger bodied than I imagined.

I was so captivated by the buck's stunning stature, it was hard to put the bins down. But I did, then reached full draw and let out a grunt. That's when the buck stopped inside 25 yards. The white fletching disappeared behind the shoulder. It took off, straight downhill. I listened as the crashing of brush faded.

I didn't hear the buck fall, so gave it 20 minutes before picking up the blood trail in the beam of my headlamp. The shot felt good, but I've seen arrows take crazy turns, and didn't want to chance bumping the buck.

The lung blood flowed out both sides of the buck and was easy to follow. The deer piled up just over 100 yards from where it was shot.

I've weighed two blacktails that tipped the scales to over 200 pounds, the largest being 216. This buck was all that, likely more. But it was dark, temperatures were in the 20s and I was by myself.

There was no getting this buck out whole. I snapped a couple photos and started quartering and packing. I missed Thanksgiving dinner with my family.

I had over 1,100 trail camera pictures of the grand buck, logged over 125 hours hunting it for over three seasons, and for one fleeting moment, laid eyes on it. That's blacktail hunting, and why I rank consistently taking a mature buck to be the most challenging of all big game hunting in North America.

For signed copies of Scott Haugen's popular book, Trophy Blacktails: The Science of the Hunt, visit www.scotthaugen.com. Follow Scott's adventures on Instagram and Facebook.



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WHAT'S NEW *for* 2025

While there are no earth-shaking big game regulation changes for 2025, there are, as usual, a number of refinements and adjustments to address changing conditions such as big game population numbers or tweaking regs to make life a little easier for the hunting public, as well as new and deleted hunts.

Here's a quick rundown of the main changes.

BIG GAME

DEER

In the wake of an excellent 2023 hunting season, no changes are planned for the Western Oregon General Buck Deer Any Legal Weapon season. Harvest for the 2023 black-tailed deer rifle hunts saw a 9% increase in hunter numbers to

nearly 70,000 and a colossal 47% jump in the overall harvest representing a 37% success rate. On the other hand, general season bow hunter numbers were down, with 8% fewer hunters and 26% decline in the overall harvest for a 13% success rate.

Controlled mule deer harvest for the 2023 season was 14,045 for all legal weapon hunters and 2,175 for muzzleloaders. This represented a 3% and 2% increase in harvest, respectively. The success rate for mule deer ALW hunters increased by 11% over the previous season to 47%, but declined by 5% to 39% for muzzleloaders. For bowhunters, harvest increased by 11% over 2022, for a success rate of 27%.

Perhaps the most important news for mule deer involves the updated Mule Deer Management Plan, which was approved by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in June 2024. Last updated in 2003,

the new plan is the result of a decade of research by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine the factors behind the steady decline of mule deer populations in Oregon – a trend that is also occurring throughout the West. That includes habitat degradation, climate change, and migration corridors and connectivity.

OHA helped shape the new Mule Deer Plan with extensive input that resulted in a plan that will be more actionable, and OHA is eager to jump into assisting in its implementation, including the establishment of a new OHA Mule Deer Fund.

How to address those issues will have an impact on big game regulations and structure, which is mandated within the updated plan. While mule deer hunting regulations incorporating the plan's recommendations won't be implemented until 2026, ODFW will conduct discussions



Tag numbers for 2025 reflect changes in big game population trends.

BY JIM YUSKAVITCH

over the next year on the details for how regulations will be changed and implemented – something in which hunters will want to be sure to participate.

The few changes to deer hunts for the 2025 season include three new northeast Oregon white-tailed deer hunts – 158M Chesnimnus Private, 159 Snake River Private and 161 Imnaha Private. These hunts will offer 110 tags each with an any white-tailed deer bag limit. Hunters who harvest a white-tailed deer must have their animal tested for Chronic Wasting Disease by ODFW.

While Oregon has so far kept CWD at bay, there are documented infected free-ranging deer in Idaho along where the Snake River forms the boundary between the two states, as well as multiple documented cases in Washington and California.

In all, ODFW is increasing the number of controlled buck and antlerless deer tags by about 1% for 2025.

Updated population models using data including deer densities, adult and juvenile survival and buck ratios show that western black-tailed deer have ceased their decline and may even be increasing in some units. There is no official population estimate.

Oregon's mule deer population is currently estimated at 155,100, and has declined 0.2% between 2023 and 2024. The good news is that the decline is less than the 2.5% drop in numbers since 2020, and may mean that the population is responding positively to recent mild winters, and wetter, cooler summers.

ELK

While there are no changes slated for Oregon general elk hunts, there are some

changes in store for controlled elk hunts. These include deleting the Zumwalt #4 and North Juniper hunts, as they are no longer needed to address elk damage issues. A new hunt on private land in the Ukiah Valley is being added where there is an ongoing high level of conflict with elk and agriculture.

Overall, the number of controlled elk tags offered for 2025 will decrease by 2% from 2024. Some of the reasons for that decrease include fewer elk seen during monitoring surveys and bull ratios below management objectives in particular management units.

For the 2023 season, 89,494 hunters harvested 15,550 elk for an overall 24% success rate. The success rate for controlled hunts was 25%, and 20% for general season hunts. However, success rates for 2023 were a little lower than for 2022.



KLAAMATH BASIN/JOHN MCFARLAND III

data, 22 are at or near management objective, and overall 113% of the management objective for those units. The Maupin, Biggs and Columbia Basin units are elk de-emphasis areas and do not have management objectives.

PRONGHORN

For the 2025 pronghorn season, ODFW will be offering 2,047 tags for 52 hunts, which is 25 fewer tags than the 2024 season.

Oregon's pronghorn population is estimated to be 16,000 to 19,000 animals and is holding steady. Pronghorns are very sensitive to environmental conditions and habitat conditions, but in many parts of their range they have been seeing improved population numbers due to recent wetter summers and milder winters.

Mule deer numbers declined only slightly this past year. OHA helped improve Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan and launched a new Mule Deer Fund aimed at recovering mule deer herds.

The Roosevelt elk population in western Oregon is struggling in some areas. Only seven of 18 wildlife management units are near or above management objectives. The western Oregon Roosevelt elk population is estimated to be 55,422, which is 78% of the management objective

of 70,850. The Willamette, Applegate and Melrose units are elk de-emphasis areas and do not have management objectives.

In eastern Oregon, Rocky Mountain elk numbers continue to be healthy, with an estimated population of 61,577. Within the 29 management units with population

BIGHORN SHEEP

The 2025 season will see an increase in both California and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep hunting opportunities, including one new Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep hunt. The new hunt is the 556 Wenaha hunt. This is a hunt that is shared among the states of Oregon, Washington and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla

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Indian Reservation. Jurisdiction to allocate the tag rotates among those entities every three years, with 2025 being Oregon's turn.

Overall, ODFW will be offering 136 bighorn sheep tags, including 80 California bighorn ram tags, 50 California ewe tags and six Rocky Mountain ram tags. These are offered over a total of 31 hunts – 4 Rocky Mountain bighorn hunts and 27 California bighorn hunts.

All five Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep tag holders successfully harvested an animal in 2023, along with holders of the special auction and raffle hunt tags. California bighorn sheep hunters had a 96% success rate, with a total of 94 animals harvested. An additional California bighorn was also harvested with a special tag for a terminally ill youth hunter

Oregon's California bighorn sheep population is estimated at 4,000 to 4,200 animals in 32 herds. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep numbers are estimated to be 900 to 1,100 in 11 herds. Some Rocky Mountain bighorn herds still suffer from respiratory disease problems and ODFW continues to monitor them, particularly the Lookout Mountain herd.

MALHEUR COUNTY/RANDY SHIPLEY



Oregon pronghorn numbers are currently holding steady, and tag numbers reflect that trend.



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DAVID BRANT

BEAR AND COUGAR

Spring bear hunting regulations were especially controversial this year. ODFW received thousands of comments and 30 people testified before the Commission, both for and against. Thanks to support rallied by OHA and allies such as Howl for Wildlife, the Commission ruled to continue spring bear hunting in 2025, including an increase of about 2% in tags offered, along with a new bear hunt for youth hunters.

Those tag increases include for the 746A South Blue Mountains Hunt and the 752A Starkey-Ukiah Hunt for a total of 150 additional tags. The new youth bear hunt is the 717T Alsea-Stott Mountain youth hunt.

The 2023 spring bear controlled hunt harvest was 780 bears for an overall 17% success rate. In the general fall hunt, 1,420 bears were taken for an 8% success rate.

Oregon's black bear population is estimated at a healthy 44,000, plus or minus 5,000. Harvest data compiled and analyzed by ODFW show that hunting is not negatively affecting the bear population over the long term.

No changes were made for cougar hunting in 2025. Hunter harvest for 2023 was 262. Another 182 were removed for damage control and human safety along with 24 for other mortalities such as vehicle strikes. The current estimated cougar population in Oregon is 7,040.

CWD EMERGENCY HUNTS

To be vigilant for Chronic Wasting Disease, emergency hunt rules will be expanded to permit emergency hunts when detection of the disease requires samples to be obtained or herd numbers need to be reduced to minimize spreading infection. This is a recommendation provided by the Oregon CWD Plan.

In response to the latest attack on spring bear hunting, OHA and our allies rallied support backing Oregon's current bear management, and the Fish and Wildlife Commission sided with science.

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOATS

ODFW will offer 23 Rocky Mountain goat tags for 2025 in 13 hunts. Two tags will be available for non-resident hunters. For the 2023 hunt, 18 of 32 tag holders were successful for a 63% harvest success rate.

The Rocky Mountain goat population in Oregon is about 1,100 to 1,300 animals, with the largest population in the Elkhorn and Wallowa mountains. Their numbers have been stable or increasing over the past several years.

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STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN



MOULTRIE MOBILE SHPRODUCK 1

My buddy Austin Crowson and I recently split up to scout for ducks. He headed to the Willamette River near Corvallis, while I hit some creeks in the McKenzie River drainage.

Crowson found over 300 mallards when weaseling his way through brush on a slough, but the birds spooked. Still, we decided to hunt it the next day. We shot only a few birds. Before we left, we set out a cellular trail camera. Five days later the ducks started returning. Two days after that, the slough was loaded. The following day, Crowson and I were back in the same spot and nailed a limit of ducks, thanks to the information conveyed on trail camera.

Two seasons ago, I started running cellular trail cameras to scout for ducks. I tested several models and now run over 50 Moultrie Mobile Edge trail cameras. I run all trail cameras on high definition video mode. Often, I see a few birds on camera, but hear scores more carrying on, out of frame.

Cellular trail cameras provide instant information, which is key when it comes to hunting late season ducks. Sometimes the hunting window is brief, based on water levels, time of day and food availability.

On rivers, put trail cameras on the edges of sloughs, knowing that as the river rises, ducks will come to roost and access newly exposed food. Setting trail cameras on ponds as they're rising is a good way to monitor weeds and grasses that are going underwater for the first time, allowing birds to reach newfound seeds.

I hunt the Willamette Valley a lot in January, a time when direct sunlight, though brief, will spur the growth of rye grass. The fresh grass attracts wigeon, mallards and pintails. A massive flock of ducks can eat large sections of grass down to the dirt in a day or two, and it takes 10 to 14 days for it to regrow to optimal grazing height. The last two seasons I set trail cameras in many such places, and the instant ducks were back, we were hunting the following morning, sometimes that afternoon. Putting trail



Rising water allows access to food and increases roosting spots for ducks, and trail cameras are a great way to see where and when birds are using it.

12 / 31 / 2023 03 : 36 PM  52°F



MOULTRIE MOBILE

SHPRODUCK2

12/31/2023 04:00PM

45°F

When ducks show up in an area like this, south of Corvallis, get out and hunt. Big flocks can quickly devour a food source and be gone.



Being mobile and flexible in your hunt planning will lead to expanded opportunities if you pay attention to what trail cameras are capturing.

The author has more than 50 Moultrie Mobile cellular trail cameras set, and they play a key role in his duck hunting success.



cameras in these areas yielded some epic hunts.

When a storm approaches, get trail cameras set out. The more rain that's falling and the windier it is, the better. Rain and rising water knocks grass and weed seeds off the stalk, and winds push it toward shore. If winds are coming from the south, set cameras on the north end of ponds where the blowing seeds gather. Once ducks discover it, go hunting.

An influx of ducks often arrives as storms move through parts of Oregon, but that's not the only time. Sometimes storms in Canada or along the coast hundreds of miles away force ducks and geese into new areas. Sometimes it's hard freezes that lock up roosting ponds, streams and creeks, and push birds somewhere else. Other times it's simply birds moving in search of new food or different roost sites.

Trail cameras often capture gems, too. Every season trail cameras document prized Eurasian wigeon in the Valley. Once I caught a Pacific black brant grazing in a field with over 5,000 cacklers.

Moultrie's Universal Game Camera Stakes are something I use a lot when setting trail cameras for waterfowl, because there aren't always trees to hang cameras on. The stakes are low profile and easy to



Trail cameras can be placed along the edges of sloughs and creeks to see where, and how many, ducks are using a spot, like these wood ducks near the McKenzie River.

adjust. I frequently move trail cameras, depending on sun, wind, rain and water levels, and these stands are simple to reset.

Once trail cameras are set, over the next day or so, depending on the conditions where the cameras are, I'll go into the Moultrie Mobile app and reset the Smart Zones for each Pro camera that needs it.

If you experience tall grass, brush or trees moving in the wind setting off the camera, block out those zones. Every time the camera is moved, reset the Smart Zones and you'll boost the efficiency of its opera-

tion, capturing only the shots you want.

While physically scouting for waterfowl has taught me a lot over the years, cellular trail cameras have taken my education of birds to a new level. Face it, we can't be in 30 places at once to scout, but trail cameras can.

This time of year, I have a one-man blind and selection of decoys in the back of my truck. When I wake up in the morning, I check trail cameras on my phone, then make hunting plans, accordingly. It's addictive, fun, and so productive. 📷

Come up to CHUKAR COUNTRY

We had been anticipating one of the best chukar seasons in recent history across Oregon.

According to many reports, bird numbers were well above average with excellent brood success throughout the summer of 2024. I'd made several trips to southeast Oregon scouting for antelope, and noticed abundant coveys of birds along roadsides and across the grass valleys and sage flats – more birds than I had ever seen during the months of July and August. I was planning to take my 7-year-old daughter on her first chukar hunt and wanted to make it as memorable as possible.

Malheur and Harney counties are a hotbed for game birds, including quail, ringneck pheasant, Hungarian partridge and chukar. My 9-year-old German shorthair, Porter, was ready to start the season off right, and his anticipation was off the charts once I grabbed my bird vest and packed it to the truck. He'd been patiently awaiting opening day all year, and it was now time to make the drive to the hunting grounds. Porter is a seasoned gun dog with many years of experience on upland birds. However, chukars always present a challenge to both experienced dogs and seasoned hunters.

Our trip to southeast Oregon during the early part of the season was very eventful, producing a handful of birds, tired hunters and dogs. My good friend and fellow outdoorsmen Gary Lewis and Bill Herrick came along with Reese and I. It was a most enjoyable time out under the clear night skies and rolling hilly terrain, telling sto-

ries around the dinner table and laughing.

We found several coveys throughout an isolated canyon and got some good shooting in over the first couple days. Rains had pushed and scattered the birds to higher ground from the lowlands, which made for some extensive hiking, but that's nothing new to chukar hunters. The rocky hillsides were tough on our four-legged friends' feet, but when hunting, the dogs seem to ignore the pain and scrapes. I was impressed that my daughter kept up and didn't complain, since I made sure to take time for us all to rest on a regular basis.

The birds were coming down from the tops in the morning, feeding on seeds, the last remaining insects, and freshly sprouted grasses and broadleaf plants. Rain brings the desert to life, and the birds had plenty to eat, and now an ample supply of water in puddles and smaller springs rejuvenated by the recent rain storms. The sage that had been parched by the relentless heat for most of the summer and early fall was now green and fresh smelling. Chukars call to each other across the open expanses, echoing a constant laugh as if to say get me if you can.

All of us managed to get some shooting in and put a few devil birds in our coolers.

As the season progresses, birds will scatter and push to more isolated locations where they find food away from the pressure of hunters. The good news is that there are bountiful birds this year, and finding them could be a bit easier than in the past. The challenges of cold, snowy landscapes also come into play, but can in turn make birds hold tighter for closer shooting.



Biologists and hunters observed excellent numbers of chukars in eastern Oregon this year.

'If you've been waiting for a big year to get back into upland hunting, this is the one.'

–Mikal Cline, ODFW

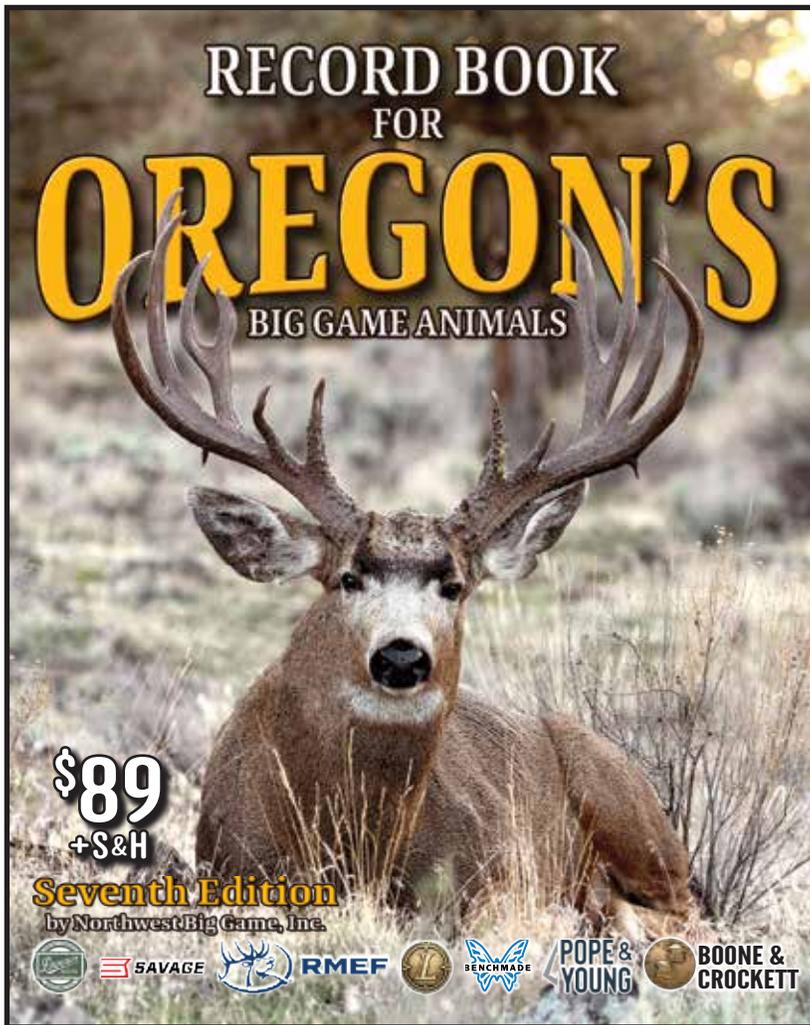
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**Story & Photos by
Troy Rodakowski**

The author and his daughter Reese recently found a few birds and made some great memories.



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A good bird dog is a must while chasing these red-legged devil birds.

I like to hunt with my 28-gauge CZ Ringneck side by side. It's light and swings quickly and effortlessly on the flush. My favorite shot selection is No. 6 for both chukar and quail.

Southeast Oregon is vast with rock cliffs, rolling hills, steep grassy faces, canyons and wide open flats. Patches of sage and juniper offer cover for upland birds. Meadow fescue and basin rye adjacent to sage patches will hold birds.

Chukar hunting heats up as the weather cools down. Dog owners know that chukar country can be hard on their furry featherfinders, but in the late season, rattlesnakes go to bed, cheatgrass seeds drop, and the temperatures cool.

Another good part about late-season hunting is that most of the big game hunters have finished up.

"If you have been waiting for a big year to get back into upland hunting, this is the one," said ODFW Upland Game Bird Coordinator Mikal Cline. "Draw a line from Lakeview to Baker, and everything south of there seems to be full of chukar and California quail, and hopefully some gray partridge."

On a 10-year average, chukar harvest is the highest among Oregon's upland birds with an estimated 41,410 birds taken by 5,904 hunters.

Wind chills in eastern Oregon get pretty brutal toward the end of season, which ends Jan. 31, so plan accordingly. Although it's cold, pack plenty of water for hunters and hounds alike.

As I march up and down the beautiful hills of southeast Oregon this winter waiting for a good point and birds to flush in gun range, I will be reminded what a great prize a vest full of feathers truly is. Nothing in chukar country comes easy, and there will likely be some sweat and blood shed along the way.

I did ask my 7-year-old daughter how she liked chukar hunting and if she would go again. She said, "Yes Daddy, but will my legs always be this sore?" I will call that a win for now. We just need to remind ourselves that the small amount of pain is worth the memories of a good dog on point and a few birds in hand.



2025 Habitat Raffle

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Tickets: \$20 or 6 for \$100.
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DONATED BY
Legacy Sports International

Proceeds will be used for OHA Regional Habitat Projects where multiple OHA chapters come together with State OHA for landscape-scale projects to benefit wildlife. 500 offered. Drawing: 7 p.m. May 3, 2025, OHA State Convention, Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City, OR. **NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.**



FALL 2024 HABITAT RAFFLE WINNER:
MATT SHORB OF POWERS



A good bag of birds from Harney County. Field reports indicate this chukar season is off the charts.



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& 1 GUIDE FOR 3 DAYS IN 2025!**

CABIN LODGING INCLUDED!

**Tickets: \$50; 7 for \$300. 500 offered for each raffle. Hunt value \$4,900.
For tickets, call 541-772-7313 or visit oregonhunters.org/store**

**Drawing: May 3, 2025, 7 p.m., OHA State Convention, Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City, OR.
NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.**



Buck Deer Hunt



Bull Elk Hunt #1



Bull Elk Hunt #2



Proceeds support OHA's mission, hunter access and habitat improvement.



Each raffle is for a 3-day guided rifle hunt for 1 hunter on the 33,000-acre Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Wallowa County during the fall 2025 season (dates TBD), including lodging at a fully functioning facility at the Preserve. Hunter may bring up to 2 guests who do not hunt. Hunting is all on foot and hunters should be in good physical condition. Recent hunter success rate has been close to 100%. Mature bucks and bulls are common with trophy potential.

The Preserve is part of the largest remaining intact Pacific Northwest bunchgrass prairie in N. America.

Food, beverages, gear & gratuity not included. Transportation to Preserve not included (once there, guide will provide transportation). Tag is guaranteed, but hunter is responsible for ODFW license & tag fees. Hunt takes place during fall 2025 season only.

Landowner tags generously donated to OHA and local charities by The Nature Conservancy (nature.org)

REWARD



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CHECKING OUR BACKTRAIL

2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

OHA won big for CWD, remained vigilant on M114 & IP28

OHA successful in short 2024 legislative session

The 2024 legislative session was a mere five weeks long, but yielded continued success for OHA's interests. Within this tight timeframe, OHA lobbied for increased state funding to establish an in-state testing facility for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) at the Oregon State University's Oregon Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory, as well as increased capacity at ODFW to expand detection protocols. While the original bill containing these funding requests died, the funds were included in the end-of-session funding bill and secured \$2.7 million toward the CWD efforts.

OHA successfully lobbied for funding to fight CWD, saved wildlife and habitat funds, and preserved oversight of energy development that could affect habitat.

OHA was part of a small and diverse group of conservation organizations who worked on one of the largest bills of the session, refining the outcomes to be more specific toward wildlife and habitat restoration and conservation. The Monsanto bill, which created the framework for how the historic \$700 million settlement from the State's lawsuit against Monsanto would be distributed, proved to be a big undertaking. However, the small band of conservation groups were able to effectively alter the original direction of the bill and return its intent to the original settlement language and the goal of restoring wildlife and habitat.

OHA was part of a small and diverse group of conservation organizations, OHA opposed a bill that would remove state oversight on certain solar energy sitings. Concerned that this removal of regulation would endanger wildlife and important habitat, OHA opposed the bill and worked to educate legislators about our concerns. The bill eventually died in committee, but energy siting is an issue that will continue to be at the forefront in each legislative cycle.

IP28, formerly IP3, looks to the 2026 Ballot

IP28 proponents have gathered more than 30,000 new signatures since shifting their sights to the 2026 ballot. As in the previous iterations, IP28 would criminalize hunting, fishing, and trapping, as well as criminalize wildlife management efforts,

OHA's 2024 Investments in Our Mission

Projects benefiting Oregon's wildlife & sportsmen:	\$274,414
Publications, information & education:	\$379,454
Defending hunting rights/Advocating for wildlife:	\$158,412
Fighting poaching in Oregon:	\$36,200
Volunteer hours donated by OHA members:	30,678

education and research with animals, and even trapping vermin such as mice and gophers. It would also effectively end farming, ranching, and eating Oregon-grown animal products such as meat, dairy and seafood.

As outrageous as the concept may sound, the reality is that they continue to build upon their previous signature gathering work and continue to receive large donations to fund further collection efforts. With an early start on the 2026 effort, the proponents have until July 2026 to collect the necessary signatures, approximately 117,000, to make the ballot.

OHA continues to lead the opposition to this initiative.

Measure 114 litigation continues

Two distinct lawsuits against Measure 114 continue to play out in the courts two years after the gun control measure was narrowly passed in the 2022 election.

In the federal courts, the lawsuit in which OHA filed two supporting amicus briefs remains in a holding pattern of appeals. In June 2023, a federal judge in Portland ruled the measure did not violate the U.S. Constitution, prompting an appeal that has the potential to reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

The lawsuit filed in the Oregon court system has provided relief to Oregon firearms owners since the Harney County judge stayed the effects of the measure and eventually ruled it unconstitutional. That ruling has been appealed by the State and is currently awaiting the opinion of the Oregon Court of Appeals.

To donate to OHA's Victory Fund, see Page 13, call 541-772-7313, or visit <https://oregonhunters.org/donate>



OHA made hay for Oregon's wildlife, habitat & hunters in '24

OHA's Conservation Team had another busy year in 2024. There were numerous big accomplishments working on the ground for habitat restoration and enhancement and influencing important wildlife and land management decisions. OHA focused on conservation priorities across the state in various arenas.

Conducting OHA Regional Wildlife Habitat Projects

Nine OHA chapters came together and installed 2 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing around the Willow Prairie on USFS land near Butte Falls, and just west of the Sky Lakes Wilderness on June 15 and 16. OHA has now protected two of the three large meadow systems under the umbrella of our 3-year Southwest Cascades Meadow Protection Project.

OHA is on schedule to complete the third leg of this project when we fence Short Creek Prairie in June 2025. OHA Conservation staff are currently working with USFS and ODFW to lay the groundwork for more events in 2025. OHA's regional project concept has been a great success, and we will continue to bring OHA chapters together for large projects that offer a substantial benefit to wildlife.

Updating Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan

OHA worked throughout the first half of 2024 to provide our perspectives and influence the revision of the Mule Deer Management Plan for the benefit of mule deer in Oregon and hunters. This important update, which culminated at the June Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, sets the stage for improving mule deer herd numbers and habitat throughout their range in eastern Oregon.

Species plans are essential, but implementing the plan on the ground for the benefit of mule deer is now the focus of



OHA's Conservation Team of staff, committee members and volunteers has continued to work hard to restore and reclaim recognition that sportsmen and women are our state's premier conservationists.

OHA members fenced a rejuvenating aspen stand at the annual White River project. To donate to OHA's Wildlife Fund, see Page 13, call 541-772-7313 or visit <https://oregonhunters.org/donate>

OHA. Even before the plan was approved, OHA began working on ways to implement the plan. This new plan catalyzed the establishment of the new OHA Mule Deer Fund that will be used to help get projects done on the ground to improve mule deer habitat.

Creating Mule Deer Fund

The Goal of OHA's new Mule Deer Fund is to raise \$50,000 annually to collectively fund large habitat projects that are specifically implemented to improve conditions for mule deer. OHA chapters are largely funding this effort and OHA's Deer Subcommittee will work with OHA Conservation Staff to allocate funds to worthy landscape-scale projects aimed at improving conditions for mule deer.

This effort seeks to 1) benefit mule deer herd ranges of extreme, very high, and high management concern, 2) fund projects that will leverage OHA funds as match to attain additional state, federal and partner funding and 3) address herd range priority action items that OHA helped integrate into the Mule Deer Management Plan.

OHA will select and fund quality projects in February 2025.

Supporting the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative

State OHA and OHA chapters around the state have committed to funding projects aimed to benefit deer and elk in the Blue Mountains. OHA contributed \$15,000 to the Damon Aspen Project that will fence aspen stands, thin conifer, and improve elk

security on the Malheur National Forest. This project has thinned 11,700 acres of conifer, burned 900 acres to improve elk forage, and restored 240 acres of aspen to date. OHA funding will allow for 300 additional acres of aspen stand restoration and 100 additional acres of aspen fencing.

OHA also gave \$10,000 to the Sunflower Juniper Removal Project on the Ochoco National Forest. Juniper encroachment is a major concern for deer and elk, because it results in reduced forage for these species. OHA funding will help forest managers methodically cut 150 acres of juniper, which will restore perennial grass and bitterbrush communities in the area.

State OHA and OHA's Union-Wallowa Chapter applied for and received an LOP deer tag on The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie to raffle with proceeds (\$22,000) funding the Sheep Creek Thinning Project to benefit deer and elk in the Starkey Unit. OHA funds will aid the thinning and slash reduction of 1,062 acres on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

OHA contributed \$10,000 to an Oregon State University research project in northeast Oregon quantifying benefits of thinning treatments, and elk density on pollinators and flower abundance. Initial analyses show elk herbivory is good for flower abundance and diversity, which benefits pollinators and species of conservation concern. Additionally, thinning treatments that open the forest canopy have led to a shift in flowering plant composition, which benefits species dependent on early seral habitat. All wildlife are important, and we will need all of our early seral obligate species to right the ship of forest management in Oregon.



Fighting CWD Spread

CWD continued to make news across the west in 2024. This dreadful, always fatal disease has now been confirmed in Idaho, California and Washington. OHA continued to work on programs to detect and prevent the spread of CWD to Oregon. OHA was successful in securing \$1.9 million in state funding to add capacity to the state's program and initiate an in-state testing facility at Oregon State University. OHA also encouraged the ODFW Commission to continue their effort to increase CWD funding and awareness. OHA staff assisted at a CWD check-station.

The future support of the Commission and our partners is vital in preventing and ultimately reducing prevalence of the disease. OHA is doing its part to incentivize hunters to have their deer or elk sampled for CWD by offering drawings for rifle prizes.

Tracking Renewable Energy Development, Impacts on Wildlife

With Oregon's aggressive clean energy goals looming in the near future, an immense amount of effort is being put into development of clean, renewable energy in our state. This led to policy discussions in the legislature, local governments and state agencies. OHA was active in nearly all of these processes to safeguard against critical habitat losses and negative impacts to wildlife.

Even in the short session, legislation was introduced around solar energy development in the legislature that kept OHA Policy Director Amy Patrick busy. OHA staff also served on a Rule Advisory Committee for the Department of Land Conservation and Development that was focused on eastern Oregon solar siting, as well as a natural resources workgroup for the Oregon Department of Energy for the development of the Oregon Energy Strategy.

Testifying on Key Public Land Plans and Projects

In 2024, the BLM continued working on the regional BLM "Western Solar Plan" that sets the stage for potential solar farm



OHA protected a Cascade forage meadow with wildlife-friendly fencing last spring.

development on public lands. OHA and its partners worked hard to ensure that any potential development would minimize impacts to important wildlife habitat and our ability to hunt.

The Northwest Forest Plan amendment process stumbled its way through 2024. This contentious process is of great concern to OHA, because it affects seven National Forests in Oregon and will provide the future direction of these forests. Of particular importance to OHA is the need for providing habitat for all indigenous wildlife, not just those that depend on old forests.

The past year also saw the launch of a major process for the three National Forests in northeast Oregon, the Umatilla, Malheur, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, to update their forest plans. OHA has provided initial comments, and will continue to track this planning process.

Defending Spring Bear, Sage Grouse Hunting

OHA testified at nearly every ODFW Commission meeting and flagged several wildlife management issues that we will continue to work on into the foreseeable future. OHA was the only organization to testify on game bird regulations at April's ODFW Commission meeting. OHA supported continued controlled sage-grouse hunting that yields critical population information for wildlife managers and

thanked ODFW for using hunters to mitigate turkey damage.

At the big game regulations Commission meeting, OHA summarized comments and provided in-person testimony that helped save spring bear hunting, and stressed the need to invest resources in moose management in Oregon.

Habitat Connectivity Wildlife Migration Work

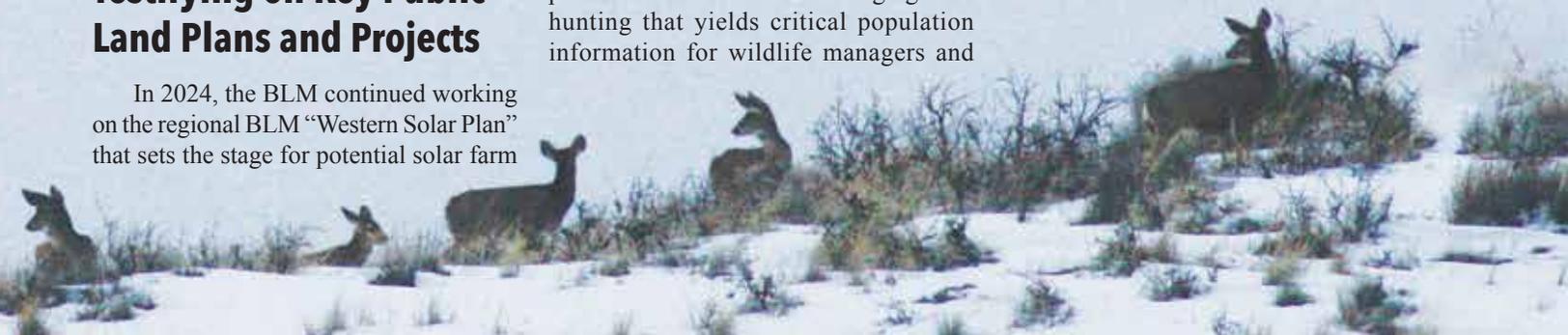
OHA worked tirelessly to improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife vehicle collisions. Conservation staff have been involved in wildlife crossing projects across the state including projects planned on Interstate 5 and state highways 20, 97 and 82. This work accomplishes multiple goals, such as reducing wildlife mortality, lessening damage to vehicles, and conserving migration corridors for big game. Nearly all of OHA staff's time on this work is funded through a partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts.

Launching OHA Women's Network, First Projects

Women of OHA launched in January of 2024 and quickly grew a large following. The group held a virtual meet & greet early in the year, followed by participation at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show in Portland, and culminating in the first annual Women's Weekend Away event in October. The October event was attended by 30 women who took part in a bitterbrush planting project followed by a day of chukar hunting. (See Page 46.)

The level of interest and participation ensure continued growth and investment in the Women of OHA program. With women as the fastest-growing demographic in both hunting and sport shooting, the program is timely for bringing new members to OHA and the hunting community, as a whole.

The program is supported by funding from the Leupold & Stevens Foundation and other generous donors.



OHA STATE CONVENTION



Banquet • Auctions • Raffles

Saturday, May 3, 2025 • Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City

JOIN US AT THE BEACH!



**3 TNC Zumwalt Prairie
DEER & ELK DREAM HUNT
Raffle Drawings! See P. 34**



➤ **ENJOY A GOURMET DINNER!!**

➤ **AWESOME AUCTIONS!** More than 100 top-quality items in live and silent auctions - great trips, gear, fine art and much more!

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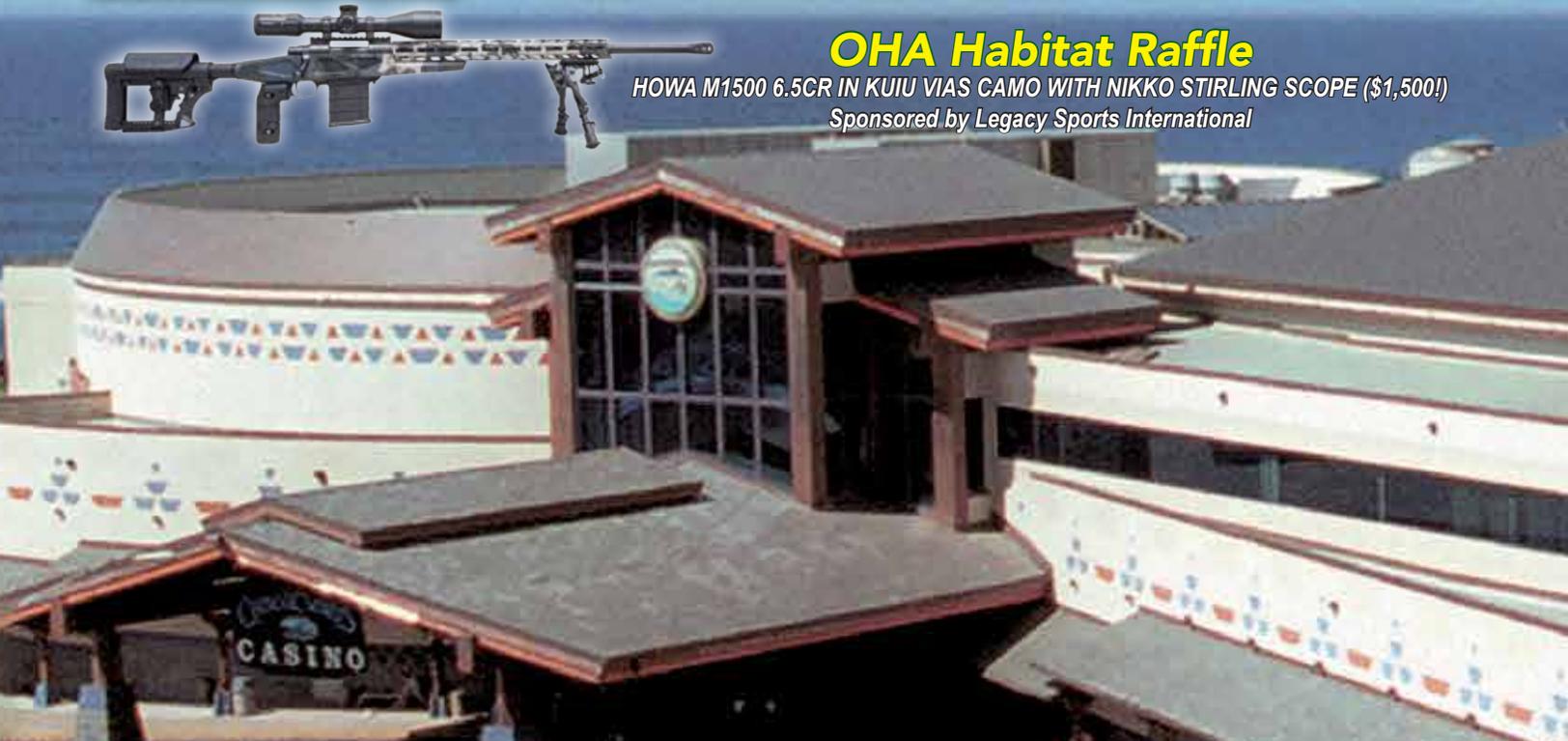
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TROPHY PACKAGE \$400*

- 1 in 10 wins a Howa Carbon Fiber barrel 6.5 PRC green Hogue stock (\$1,100)
- 2 Dinners & 6 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 8 Early Bird Tickets**
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

**LONE WOLF PACKAGE \$300*
(1-PERSON TROPHY PACKAGE)**

- 1 in 10 wins a Howa Carbon Fiber barrel 6.5 PRC green Hogue stock (\$1,100)
- 1 Dinner & 3 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 8 Early Bird Tickets**
- 1 Commemorative Gift

DELUXE PACKAGE \$300*

- 2 Dinners & 2 Drink Tickets
- 2 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 24 General Raffle Tickets
- 2 Early Bird Tickets**
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

STAG PACKAGE \$150*

- 1 Dinner & 1 Drink Ticket
- 1 Party Starter Raffle Ticket
- 12 General Raffle Tickets
- 1 Early Bird Ticket**
- 1 Commemorative Gift

* OHA member prices. Nonmembers add \$35 for 1-year OHA membership.

** Early Bird tickets must be ordered by April 3, 2025.

Party Starter: 2 guns (\$599 & \$569). Max 1,900 tickets.
Special: Rifle (\$800); Knife (\$40). Max 1,760 tickets.
General: 45 items (>\$7,000 total). Max 24,000 tickets.
Early Bird: Rifle (\$599); Knife (\$40). Max 1,900 tickets.

Past conventions have sold out early.

ORDER YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

oregonhunters.org/2025-oha-state-convention



Tickets must be ordered and prepaid by April 23, 2025

To order your tickets, call (541) 772-7313

or visit oregonhunters.org





DESCHUTES COUNTY/RYAN HOEFT

OHA funds will leverage matching funds for projects that will benefit Oregon's mule deer herds.

Chapters ante up to support OHA's new Mule Deer Fund

New OHA Mule Deer Fund will award \$50,000 annually in grant funding for large projects that address limiting factors for Oregon mule deer

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA regarded the development of the new Mule Deer Management Plan, which was adopted last June, as a top priority. OHA was the leading conservation organization throughout the effort to shape the new plan for the benefit of mule deer, their habitat and hunters. Management plans are important, but words on paper are meaningless without action. OHA successfully challenged ODFW to make the plan actionable with specific to-do lists for each individual herd range.

OHA's new Mule Deer Fund will provide key match funds for projects designed to benefit mule deer. State OHA, its staff and deer committee are managing the fund, but the execution of this concept would not have been possible without many OHA chapters and the Central Oregon Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation leaning in.

The fund will award \$50,000 in grant

OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION MULE DEER FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	
Chapter	2024
Redmond	\$10,000
Pioneer	\$10,000
Bend	\$10,000
Umpqua	\$ 7,500
Klamath	\$ 5,000
Capitol	\$ 5,000
Josephine County	\$ 5,000
Mid Willamette	\$ 5,000
C.O. QUWF	\$ 5,000
Ochoco	\$ 5,000
Lake County	\$ 3,000
Lincoln County	\$ 500

funding in March 2025, to one or more projects that help restore and enhance conditions for mule deer. OHA conservation staff and the OHA deer sub-committee will rank projects and allocate funds. Submitted projects that will rank highest and be most competitive for funding will address: 1) an issue likely limiting an Oregon mule deer population, 2) a mule deer herd range of extreme or very high management concern, 3) a primary action item in the Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan for a specific herd range, 4) a need within a mule deer migration corridor or priority wildlife connectivity area on publicly accessible lands, and 5) will leverage OHA funds as match to attain additional partner, state or federal funding.

OHA mourns sad loss of Ken Hand

Former OHA State President Ken Hand of Klamath Falls lost his battle with lymphoma in October at 79.

Ken volunteered many hours at the state and chapter levels with OHA, as well as other wildlife organizations.

He started the annual PLAY Outdoors event in Klamath Falls. For many years, this event, designed to introduce children to outdoor activities, has been held at the Klamath Fairgrounds, where each year about 1,000 children and their families are introduced to various outdoor activities.

Ken was instrumental in launching the Klamath County Sportsmen's and Outdoor Show last year, and this year's show will be dedicated to Ken's memory.

He initiated a number of wildlife and habitat projects in Klamath and Lake counties. Some of them are still ongoing.

Ken will be deeply missed, but much of what he started will live on.

In Memoriam

Contributions made recently to the

OHA Memorial Fund

In memory of

DERRICK RUNEY

from Lois Fox, Joel Dietzman, Jennifer Futrell, Stuart Clark, Karyn Tilander, Stanley McCallister, Catherine, Cindy & Sandy Wallace



Send contributions in honor of loved ones who loved wildlife to:
OHA Memorial Wildlife Fund
 P.O. Box 1706
 Medford, OR 97501

OHA LADD MARSH MEMORIAL OVERLOOK/JIM WARD

OHA steps up again on CWD

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

Instead of chasing deer on opening weekend, OHA State President Steve Hagan and OHA staff helped out at the Prineville chronic wasting disease (CWD) check station. This isn't glamorous work, but it is important.

Check stations like the ones in Baker, Elgin, Celilo and Prineville take samples of lymph nodes that can be tested for the presence of CWD. The goal was to get successful hunters in and out of the check station within 10 minutes.

According to ODFW, a total of 362 samples were taken during the opening weekend period at the check stations. At OHA's Nov. 23 state board meeting, ODFW reported that 894 samples had been collected.

As incentive, hunters who submit samples for CWD testing will be entered

into a drawing for a rifle combo or scope that were provided by OHA.

The check stations opened again over the first weekend of the first elk season in eastern Oregon, with an additional check station in Ukiah.

Hunters with late-season hunts can submit samples at local ODFW offices, and many of the

meat processors and taxidermists are able to take samples as well.

The lymph nodes are located at the base of the skull under the bottom jaw bone. Leaving the top vertebrae attached to the head will ensure that a good sample can be taken from your animal. Have your transport tag attached, be ready with either your paper tag or e-tag, and answer a few simple questions on the wildlife management unit where you harvested your animal. That's it! ODFW staff and volunteers will take care of the rest.

Late-season hunters can submit samples at local ODFW offices.



OHA pays out \$5,000 in rewards in 11 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 12 reward checks to informants in 11 cases totaling \$5,000 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Waste of game bird, unlawful take/possession of game bird, Take/possession of Coho in closed area, failure to maintain retailer records to sell Lingcod, no big game tag, no resident hunting license, waste of buck deer, unlawful possession of buck deer, trespass 2, unlawful take of bull elk, waste of wildlife, take of Chinook using prohibited hooks, 6 counts of unlawful take/possession of Brown Trout, unlawful take of Coho, no resident angling license, no combined harvest tag, fishing by prohibited method, take/possession of foul-hooked fish, unlawful take of Coho x 3, no resident license, no harvest tag, angling prohibited method – netting, angling in closed area/stream and unlawful take/possession of Coho x 2.

OHA STATE-LEVEL SPONSORSHIPS

Please support the sponsors who support OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage. For information about OHA state-level sponsorship opportunities, call the OHA State Office at (541) 772-7313.

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sunriverlodging.com





Join OHA's Jim Akenson and Vic Coggins for insightful discussions on the status of Oregon's wolves & bighorns.





<https://tinyurl.com/3z8wmcys>

CHAPTER NEWS

OHA 2025 banquets feature a Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Wby Vanguard First Lite Specter .300 WM



HELLS CANYON MULLEY



BRYAN COOK

OHA's Yamhill and Tillamook chapters manned the Stimson gate to allow weekend public access.

You're invited to an OHA banquet near you in '25!

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m., Oregon Trail Restaurant.
2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Community Event Center, Baker City.
Update: Be sure to join us for our chapter banquet in April. If you are able to help us put on a great evening, call Charlie.

BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter
Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., December meeting is at the VFW Hall, 4th and Olney in Bend.
2025 Fundraiser: March 8, Bend Riverhouse Lodge, 541-480-9848.
Update: We pledged \$10,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Our annual youth upland bird hunt in late October was another huge success, thanks to our many great volunteers. Our guest speaker at our latest meeting was Brett Michalski, COCC Professor of Outdoor Leadership and Natural Resources Program. Congratulations to Casey Middaugh for winning the winter steelhead fishing trip for two.

BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com
Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, The Saddle, 2200 Court St., Pendleton, 5:30 p.m. meeting, dinner and drinks available.

CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

<https://oregonhunters.org/capitol-chapter>
Chapter Meetings: See the monthly news-

CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com
Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 snacks, 7 p.m. meeting, 4H Clubhouse, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.
2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Clatsop County Fairgrounds, 503-440-9934.
Update: We are looking for volunteers to help organize and gather donations for the chapter banquet. Please contact David Richards at 503-440-9934 if you can lend a hand.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Elks Lodge, 350 Belton Rd., St. Helens.

CURRY

JAMIE BADGER 541-499-2245

Badgergirls3@gmail.com
Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, Double D's Cafe, Gold Beach, 6:30 p.m.
2025 Fundraiser: April 26, Event Center on the Beach, Gold Beach, 406-499-2234.
Update: Our chapter will host our fundraising banquet in April in Gold Beach. Get your tickets to an evening full of fun and great prizes.

EMERALD VALLEY

RON MARTIN 541-954-5459

EmeraldOHA@live.com
Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzler, 1010 Postal Way, Springfield.
2025 Fundraiser: July 19, Cascadian Bowmen 91714 Poole Creek Rd., Noti. 541-954-5459.
Update: Our chapter will host a booth at the Eugene Boat and Sportsman's Show Jan. 31 – Feb. 2. Be sure to stop by.

HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter
Facebook: Hoodview OHA
Chapter Meetings: Second Thursday, Elmer's Restaurant, Portland.
2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 22, Monarch Inn, Clackamas, 503-314-3090.
Update: Get your tickets now for the banquet in February. Contact 503-314-3090 or ohahoodview2019@gmail.com.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

ddowns2646@gmail.com
Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., Black Bear Diner, Grants Pass.
2025 Fundraiser: March 22, Josephine County Fairgrounds, 541-660-5861 or 541-761-1852.
Update: We pledged \$5,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42).

KLAMATH

DENNIS WIARD 541-891-3549

dtwiard@charter.net
<https://oregonhunters.org/klamath-chapter>
Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Shasta View Community Center.
2025 Fundraiser: April 26, Klamath County Fairgrounds.
Update: We pledged \$5,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). We are hosting a booth March 14-16 at the Klamath Falls Sportsmen's & Outdoor Show, dedicated to former chapter and state OHA president Ken Hand, who passed away recently.

LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 5 p.m., VFW Hall, Lakeview.
2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Fairgrounds.

Update: We pledged \$3,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42).

LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

tjaz@charter.net

Chapter Meetings: Quarterly Meetings, 6 p.m. meeting, dinner 5:30, Rogue Brewing Public House on the Bayfront, Newport.

Update: We pledged \$500 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Our chapter meetings are now quarterly and will be held in December, March, June and September. Please join us at the next meeting.

MALHEUR COUNTY

BRUCE HUNTER 208-573-5556

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6 p.m., no host dinner 5:30, location TBA in the chapter newsletter.

Update: We thank everyone who attended the Christmas party on Dec. 3. We gave away a rifle and a number of door prizes.

MID-COLUMBIA

TONY WHITE 541-490-2980

Quarterly Chapter Meetings: 6 p.m., ODFW's screen print shop on Klindt Drive, The Dalles.

MID-WILLAMETTE

KEN MCCALL 541-753-8588

kenemccall@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/midwillamettechapteroregonhuntersassociation>

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday of odd-numbered months; board meets at 6 p.m., general meeting at 7 p.m., Old Armory, Albany.

2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Albany Boys & Girls Club, 541-971-3351.

Update: We pledged \$5,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Congratulations to our 2024 chapter scholarship winner, Luke Donaldson. Luke attends the OSU Cascades campus in Bend and is majoring in Natural Resources.

OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., COCC Open Campus Room 119.

2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 15, Crook County Fairgrounds, 541-410-5050.

Update: We pledged \$5,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Tickets are selling fast to our annual banquet to be held in February; get yours now.

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., come early for dinner, Canby Rod & Gun Club.

2025 Fundraiser: March 1, Mt. Angel Community Festhalle, 506-710-1233.

Update: We pledged \$10,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Be sure to attend our monthly chapter meeting in February; it's our Buck & Bull Contest. If you were lucky enough to get something to brag about this year, bring it down.

REDMOND

K. C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, VFW Hall. Dinner, 5 p.m., member meeting at 6 p.m., board meeting follows.

2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 22, Deschutes County Expo Center, featuring an Oregon Access & Habitat Statewide Deer Tag Auction.

Update: We pledged \$10,000 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Our annual banquet is right around the corner. Get your pre-sale tickets now.

ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

Firepmt29@gmail.com

Chapter Meetings: Eagles, 2nd Thursday, 6 p.m. social/dinner, 7 p.m. presentation.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15, Ashland Hills Inn, 541-773-8736.

Update: Thanks to everyone who brought in their 2024 Heads and Horns to our December chapter meeting. We will host a booth at the sports show in February.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Monday, Board Meeting at 6:30, 3rd Monday, General Meeting at 7 p.m., ODFW Tillamook office.

2025 Fundraiser: May 3, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, 503-842-7153, featuring an Oregon Access & Habitat Statewide Elk Tag Auction.

Update: Chapter members checked hunters in and out at the Stimson gate for the weekends of the coast elk first and second seasons.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Corner Bar & Grill, Coquille.

2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Coquille Community Building.

TUALATIN VALLEY

TONY KIND 503-290-6143

oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, dinner 6 p.m., meeting 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

2025 Fundraiser: March 29, Wingspan Event Center, 503-502-0611.

Update: Recent meeting guest speaker, Bradley Joyce of the American Bear Foundation, told us about the many things the foundation does and the plans they have for future projects and development.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 6 p.m. Backside Brewery.

2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Seven Feathers Casino, 541-430-7324.

Update: We pledged \$7,500 to OHA's new Mule Deer Fund (see Page 42). Our first chapter meeting of 2025 will be held at Backside Brewing on Jan. 21. All members in attendance will be entered into a drawing for a gun. We are in need of volunteers to help with our annual banquet in April.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15, Blue Mountain Conference Center, 541-786-1283.

Update: We plan to have a great fundraiser in March, but we need more volunteers to help make that happen. There are many jobs available, big and small.

YAMHILL COUNTY

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

ohayamhill.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m. meeting, 6 p.m. dinner, American Legion Hall, McMinnville.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15, Yamhill County Fairgrounds, 503-737-9483.

Update: Our 23rd annual banquet is in full swing and tickets are now on sale. 🍷

OHA IN ACTION

BY TYLER DUNGANNON



Women from 13 OHA chapters planted seedlings on OHA's conservation easement in Metolius Unit winter range habitat, and hunted chukars the next day.

Women of OHA plant shrubs, hunt chukars

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

A total of 32 women from 13 different OHA chapters came together in late October to improve winter range habitat for wildlife, participate in a shooting skills clinic and hunt chukars in the Metolius Unit. The Women of OHA planted 1,100 bitterbrush plants adjacent to the Crooked River National Grassland, spent well over 3 hours with ODFW instructors who provided ammunition and clay targets, and chased chukars to wrap up the weekend.

Registration for this event reached its cap in less than a week, and it's clear that demand for these events is high. The Women of OHA was established to take on some of this demand and this program is quickly achieving its goals. Participants left this event with an immense sense of accomplishment as a result of their hard

conservation work, new friendships, mentors, connections, and a number of chukars for dinner. This was a weekend well spent on all fronts, thanks to the Women of OHA, OHA staff, ODFW staff, USFS staff, State OHA Board Members, OHA chapter leaders and our sponsors. State OHA thanks the Bend, Umpqua, Tualatin Valley and Mid-Willamette OHA chapters, Leupold & Stevens Foundation, Legacy Sports International, onX, Brooks Chukars, and the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund for their support in making this event successful.

OHA looks forward to announcing the second annual Women of OHA Weekend Away in the fall of 2025. Plans are already in the works to mirror what was done this year by tying a fulfilling conservation project in with a shooting skills clinic and upland bird hunt.



ODFW Director Debbie Colbert plants a seedling in OHA's conservation easement in important Metolius Unit winter range habitat.



A safety clinic preceded the chukar hunt.



Some participants took their first chukars at the event.

You're Invited to OHA's 2025 Banquets for Oregon's Wildlife & Sportsmen!



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Ochoco 541-410-5050

FEBRUARY 22

Hoodview 503-314-3090

Redmond* 541-419-7215

MARCH 1

Pioneer 503-710-1233

MARCH 8

Bend 541-480-9848

MARCH 15

Capitol 503-990-2978

Rogue Valley 541-773-8736

Union-Wallowa 541-786-1283

Yamhill County 503-490-2489

MARCH 22

Josephine Co. 541-761-1852

MARCH 29

Tualatin Valley 503-502-0611

APRIL 5

Baker 541-403-0402

Clatsop County 503-440-9934

Lake County 541-417-2983

Tioga 541-294-7912

Mid-Willamette 541-971-3351

Umpqua 541-430-7324

APRIL 26

Klamath 541-891-3549

Curry 406-499-2234

MAY 3

Tillamook** 503-812-3832

OHA State Convention,* Chinook
Winds Casino, 541-772-7313

* A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction

** A&H Statewide Elk Tag auction



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OHA banquets in 2025 will feature
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Access & Habitat program is raffling off
12 exclusive tags with statewide & regional hunts,
the use of any legal weapon, & extended season dates.**

**The 2025 raffle will be held on
May 27, 2025 at 2:00 P.M.
at ODFW Headquarters in Salem, Oregon.**



**FOR MORE INFO:
Scan the QR code or go to
<https://tinyurl.com/4wevpusk>**

**The event will also be livestreamed starting at 2:00 p.m. on May 27th.
Go to www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW to attend the
event.**



All proceeds go to the management & research of the species, hunter access, & habitat enhancement.



DEER ARE HURTING. OHA IS HELPING.

**OHA is leading efforts to restore
Oregon's mule deer herds:**

- *New OHA Mule Deer Fund*
- *Habitat Projects*
- *Anti-Poaching Efforts*
- *Predator Management*
- *New Mule Deer Management Plan*
- *Chronic Wasting Disease Prevention*

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TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

See rules and enter your best shots at oregonhunters.org for a chance to win a great Tactacam prize!



WINNER:
OHA member Heath Myers of Eagle Point wins a Tactacam Reveal trail camera for his October capture of sparring bull elk in the Chetco Unit.



HONORABLE MENTION:



Marty Dillavou, an OHA member from Bly, nabs Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his July Klamath County mule deer bucks still sporting velvet.



Albany OHA member Don Greiner captures Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his photo of a Wheeler County 6x6 bull elk this past October.



La Pine resident and OHA member Debbie Taylor nabs an OHA hat and Honorable Mention for her closeup of a cow elk and herd mates this October in Upper Deschutes.



OHA member Jon Duerst from Peoria, Arizona, wins an OHA hat and an Honorable Mention spot with his Wallowa County elk in September.

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August 2, 2023



October 7, 2023



FIELD TO TABLE

By TIFFANY HAUGEN

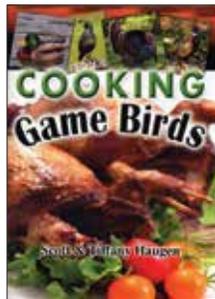
Brown Sugar Goose is sweet

We eat a lot of late-season geese; both honkers and tiny cacklers. As with our ducks, we like eating geese fresh, not freezing them and then cooking them later.

Before cooking any waterfowl, be sure all bloodshot tissues are removed and the meat is cleaned. The higher the quality of the meat at the start, the better the final recipe will be.

This sweet, caramelized recipe is a big hit in our family, so much so it makes a great dish during the holiday festivities.

- 2 large goose breasts (about a pound)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon garlic, puréed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive or coconut oil
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- Chives or green onion and chili peppers for garnish if desired



In a medium bowl, mix brown sugar, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, garlic, salt and black pepper until thoroughly combined. Slice goose breasts across the grain into thin strips and add to the brine. Let sit at room temperature 30 minutes (or refrigerate up to 8 hours).

In a large skillet, sauté onions over medium-high heat in olive or coconut oil 2-3 minutes. Push onions aside and add sliced goose to the pan. Spread meat out in a single layer. Once goose begins to brown, turn over and brown the other side. Do not overcook goose, as the flavor will become stronger the more it's cooked. Once browned, mix meat with onion. Serve over rice and garnish with chives or green onions and hot peppers.

For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular cookbook, *Cooking Game Birds*, visit scotthaugen.com.



This sweet, caramelized recipe makes for a big holiday hit.

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The hunter education program involves passing on the hunting tradition to future generations in a safe, fun, and responsible manner.

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- Hunter ethics and responsibilities
- Wildlife management and conservation
- Outdoor safety

Hunter education instructors are individuals 21 and older who have a passion for hunting. You do not need to be an expert hunter to teach this course; a strong interest in introducing young people and adults to the sport is what is required.

How do I become a Certified Instructor?

- Easy process: contact the number below for an application.



Hunter Education

**ODFW Hunter Education Program (503) 947-6002
Email: hunter.ed@odfw.oregon.gov**



SHARING the HERITAGE

BY GARY LEWIS



Two young hunters wait for ducks to show on a bluebird day in the blind.

How young hunters earn their wings (and bucks)

There's a sepia-toned picture I keep of an old Model T and a bunch of young people and their harvest of black-tailed deer. The picture is not as old as the Model T; in fact, the picture was taken 13 years ago when the car was 97 years old.

The firearms were old, too, or at least middle-aged: Pre-'64 Winchester Model 70s, an old Model 94 and a Model 54, a Savage Model 99 and a Remington. The young guns are getting older. I think Paxton was 15 then and he's 28 now. Alexa was 14 and she is 27. Paxton, Alexa and Lexie all have their own families now.

It started when my friend Lonnie died and left two daughters and two sons who would never have a chance to go fishing with their dad again. Nolan was 10 and Sam was 9 when their dad passed away. At the same time, I knew another boy their own age who needed someone to take him hunting. That was Paxton. We started with ground squirrel and rabbit hunts and pheasant hunts. When Paxton and Nolan turned 12, they drew tags for deer. Sam claimed his first deer the next season. Their moms told me what a blessing it was to have the fresh meat. And the boys were proud to have brought home game.

My own girls were hunting, too. We had a rule they had to tag a deer and catch a steelhead before they talked to boys. We found ways to bring other youngsters along when my daughters were hunting. There just seemed to be more and more children who didn't have adults to take them.

I had ground rules. The hunts would be one or two-day deals with a high probability of harvest. We brought plenty of snacks. The other rule: the young people had to want to go. As my friends saw how much fun everyone was having, they naturally wanted to help. Lee Sandberg, Jeff Aldrich, Joe Cullison, Jim Harris, Brian Engle, Jack Lewis, Zach Waterman, Sam Pyke, Larry McGlocklin, Flip Freeman, James Flaherty, Logan DeGree, Charlie Rowles and quite a few others, stepped in to help. Kristy Titus was a fantastic dorm mom and hunting guide when we needed her.

Other partners in those years included Nosler, Warne Scope Mounts, Alps Outdoorz, High Desert Safari Club, Oregon Hunt-

ers Association, Central Oregon Shooting Sports Association and the Friends of NRA.

Traditions started. We would go to Abby's Pizza in Roseburg if everyone filled their tags. And stop at Dutch Bros on the way home.

Nolan's first deer hunt lasted less than 10 minutes. We went through the gate, closed it. Stopped and glassed. Drove half a mile. It was probably Lee Sandberg that spotted the deer. "How about that one?" Nolan rested the rifle on a fence post and fired a small, fast Nosler bullet. After a nine-minute hunt, the 12-year-old notched his first deer tag.

Another favorite memory was of Emmett, who was the youngest of eight children, and no one in his family had hunted for a couple of generations. Kristy Titus offered to hunt with Emmett and mentor him. She provided a cut-down rifle for him to use and Nosler donated the ammunition. On Halloween, Emmett walked in the house with a pumpkin on his head, carrying the carcass of his deer. I am sure no one in his family will forget that moment.

Then there was Abby, Emmett's sister. We brought her on pheasant and duck hunts after taking her to the COSSA Range and shooting clay pigeons. The new hunter earned her wings when she managed to contribute pheasants and ducks to the family larder.

One of the best moments was when Paxton called me on the last day of deer season. He had been hunting by himself in the National Forest and had logged 9 days in a 12-day season. He found the tracks of a buck in light snow, followed it up and shot it, then dragged it out to his truck. He brought it to my house and showed it to me – a 4x5 mule deer.

We touched the lives of more than 20 young people at times when they really needed it. One day young Gus shot a white pigeon while we were hunting geese west of Burns. He was so proud of the pigeon.

He called last January before he went back to college.

"I want to take you chukar hunting," he said. I dropped everything. The first time I had hunted with him he was 5 years old. And now he was taking me hunting. He shot a chukar. I missed one. It was awesome.



Gary Lewis is the host of *Frontier Unlimited TV* and author of *Fishing Central Oregon*, *Fishing Mount Hood Country* and other titles. Contact Gary at www.garylewisoutdoors.com



Young Paxton cleans a blacktail buck under the watchful eye of Joe Cullison.

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

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OREGON'S GEESE



1) Western Canada – AKA honker, Great Basin. Most widespread throughout Oregon. Population stable throughout range.

2) Small Cackling – AKA cackler, cackling Canada goose. Winters in Willamette Valley, lower Columbia River. Those with white-neck rings commonly mistaken for Aleutians. Pop: 175K and decreasing in recent years, vulnerable to over-harvest.

3) Dusky Canada – Commonly mistaken for Taverner's and lesser. Winters in Willamette Valley, lower Columbia. Pop: 10K, decreasing and below objective due to earthquake caused habitat changes. No harvest allowed in NW Oregon.

4) Taverner's Cackling – AKA Tav, Taverner's Canada goose. Often mistaken as dusky, nearly indistinguishable from lesser. Winters in Willamette Valley, Columbia River/Basin. Nests Western AK. Pop: No overall estimate, PNW populations have decreased.

5) Lesser Canada – AKA lesser. Commonly mistaken as dusky, nearly indistinguishable from Tav. Winters Willamette Valley, Lower Columbia River & Basin. Nests Interior AK. Pop stable to decreasing.

6) Lesser Snow – AKA snow. Winters at Sauvie Island, Columbia Basin, uses SE basins for migration. Two color phases (white and dark), dark aka blue geese. Pop: 1.3M in Pacific Flyway, increasing in West.

7) Ross's - Commonly mistaken for lesser snow. Large numbers can stage in the Klamath, Harney Basins Feb -April. Pop: 1.1M in North America, decreasing.

8) Pacific Greater White-Fronted – AKA specklebelly or spec. Most common in SE Oregon during spring migration and smaller numbers can winter statewide. Pop: 510K, decreasing.

9) Tule Greater White-Fronted – AKA specklebelly or spec. Few winter here but use SE Oregon wetland basins during migration. Pop: 10-15K and stable.

10) Aleutian Cackling Goose – AKA Aleutian Canada Goose. Winters in Tillamook County, migrates thru South Coast. Pop: 205K, once ESA listed and now recovered.

Not pictured: Brant.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Canada Goose:** Any Canada or Cackling goose incl. Western, Vancouver, Dusky, Lesser, Taverner's, Aleutian, and Cackling.
- **Dusky Canada Goose:** Any dark-breasted (Munsell 10 YR color value 5 or less) Canada goose with a bill length between 40 and 50 millimeters. No harvest allowed in NW Oregon.
- **White Geese:** Snow and Ross's.
- **White-Fronted:** Pacific Greater and Tule.



**Oregon Department
of Fish & Wildlife**

NOSLER[®]

2025 PHOTO CONTEST

FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

1ST PRIZE: Nosler Model 21 rifle

2ND PRIZE: Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo

3RD PRIZE: Leupold Scope

4TH PRIZE: Danner Alesia Hunting Boots

5TH PRIZE: Benchmade Altitude Hunting Knife

Each finalist will receive an OHA-engraved Coast knife, and entrants whose photos are selected to appear in Oregon Hunter will receive a Nosler hat.

Two finalists in each category will be chosen and published in each issue of Oregon Hunter, beginning with the March-April issue and ending with the November-December issue. From the 10 finalists in each category, five finalist prize winners will be chosen. These will be announced in the January-February issue of Oregon Hunter. Photos received after the entry deadline will be judged for the next issue.

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

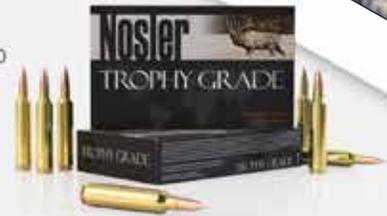
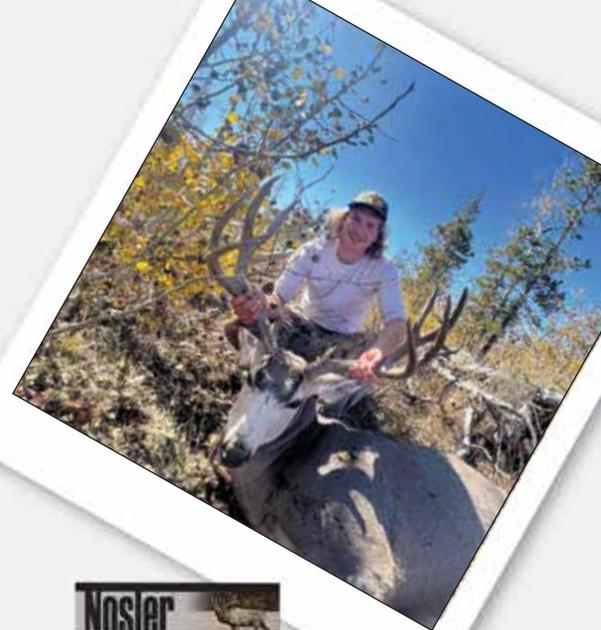
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter for more than a quarter century!

PHOTO CATEGORIES

GENERAL: Any aspect of hunting, including but not limited to preparation, camping, hunting situations, game and packing.

YOUTH: Same as above, except photos must feature a person who was 18 or younger at the time the photo was taken.

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year



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SCAN



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY WINNERS



FIRST PLACE
OHA member Bob Mumford wins a Nosler Model 21 rifle with this photo of a flower-munching black bear taken in the Yukon in September of 2023.



SECOND PLACE
OHA member Levi Hutchins of Sweet Home wins a case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo for his photo of a Lake County pronghorn.

THIRD PLACE
Matt Langer, an OHA member out of Sherwood, battled bad weather and rough roads to win a Leupold scope for his photo of an August Harney County pronghorn.



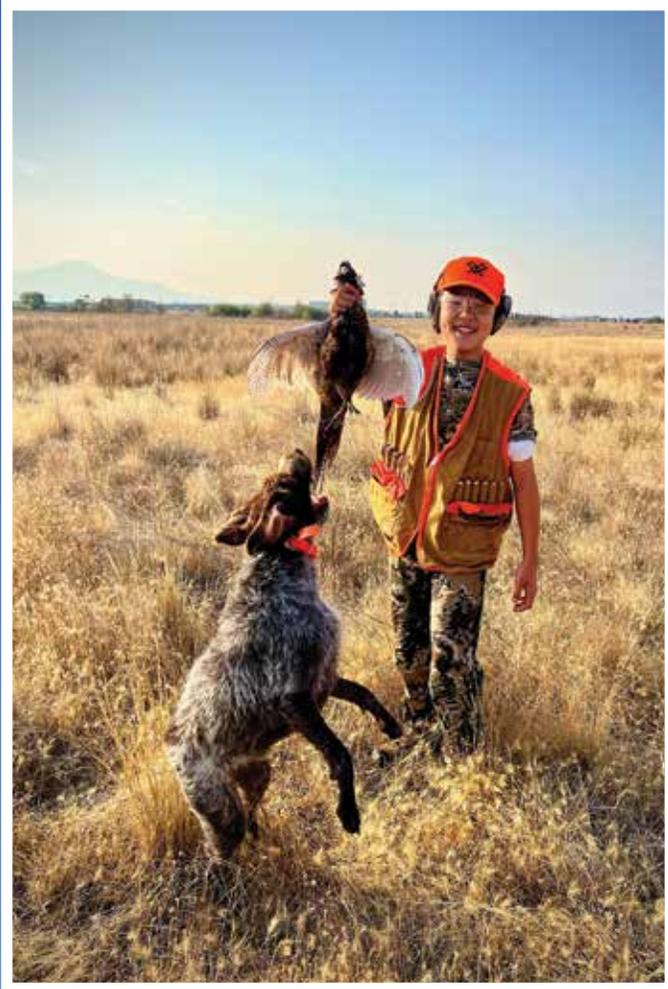
FOURTH PLACE
Evan Brannock, an OHA member from Medford, will be hiking in a new pair of Danner Alsea hunting boots for his photo of himself and a barren ground caribou taken from the Brooks Range of Alaska in 2021.



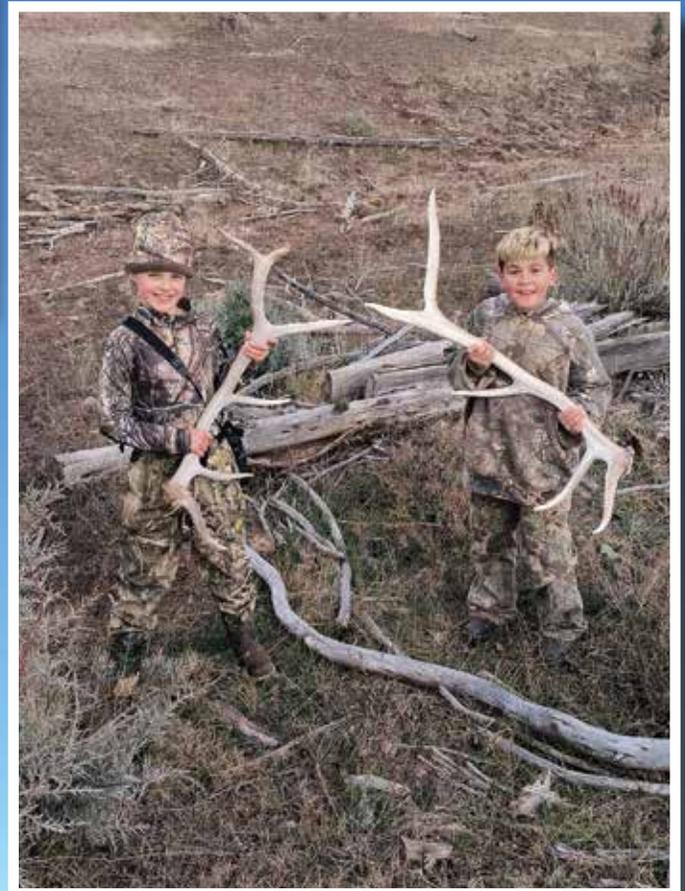
FIFTH PLACE
OHA member Hayden Miles from Florence wins a Benchmade Altitude hunting knife for his western Oregon blacktail.

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY WINNERS



FIRST PLACE
Ashland OHA member Yvette Whang wins a Nosler Model 21 rifle for this photo of Theo and Mari. This was Theo's first pheasant hunt and Mari's first point at the Denman Wildlife Area youth hunt in September 2023.



SECOND PLACE
OHA member Randy Munch of Bend wins a case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo for this photo of Owen Munch and Dakota Ellis. The kids hiked 36 miles in 4 days in the Sumpter Unit on their first official elk trip.



THIRD PLACE
Astoria resident and OHA member Mathew Dornin wins a Leupold scope for this photo of son James Dornin. This Saddle Mountain Unit buck was taken in October of 2023.



FOURTH PLACE
Eric Martin, OHA member from Corvallis, will be chasing turkeys in his new Danner Alsea hunting boots he wins for this photo of dad, sons Mason and Logan, and Mason's first turkey from a mentored hunt in the Alsea Unit this past May.



FIFTH PLACE
Chris Schnider, an OHA member from Junction City, wins a Benchmade Altitude hunting knife for this photo of Lucas and his Steens Mountain pronghorn.



By Uncle
Geddy



TICK TALK



Trust the science, but don't trust the possum on the snare drum

On the last day of deer season, we drove into Veneta and lunched at the Chinese food restaurant. There were four of us, and as I had paid for the meal, I took the first fortune cookie. Unwittingly, I violated the first rule of the cookie, which is Never Take The One Closest To You. Squinting at the very small piece of paper, I read the following: Your dearest wish will come true. My dearest wish was for a mature four-point blacktail to step out of the timber and into my sights.

Four hours later, with the sun going down, I was on a narrow two-track in the reprod when a doe stepped out of the trees. And then, right behind the doe, another deer stepped out. Wait for it ... it was the doe's fawn. Doe and fawn walked up to me with my lever action Marlin in the crook of my arm, and then it was dark and deer season was over.

But I did come home with a tick.

Late the next morning I became aware of what felt like a bruise beneath my rib cage. When I ran my fingers over it, I touched the unmistakable south end of a northbound itch hiker.

Over the years, I have amassed a modest collection of ticks tweezered from various parts of my anatomy. I have bloodsuckers from the Walla Walla, the Alsea, the Siuslaw and Willamette units and other spots on the map.

I always insert said tick in a ziplock and write the date upon the bag with a Sharpie in the event I come down with otherwise unexplainable symptoms I can blame on a tick.

What we do know is ticks belong to three different families: the majority of ticks come from *Ixodidae*, which are hard ticks and then there are the *Argasidae* which are your soft ticks, and then you have your politicians.

In ethology, which is the study of animal behavior, we find reference to the word Umwelt (pronounced oom-velt), a noun, which connotes the world as it is experienced by a particular organism.

A tick has three ways of interfacing with the umwelt. All a tick cares about can be summed up in three things: mammalian skin, heat signatures and surface tension. Given these factors, the tick senses when to leap and how to time its jump onto the host's skin and when and where to insert its hypostome.

The tick is made up of spare components left over from the first day of Creation, including the chelicerae, the palps, the hypostome, opisthosoma, the central ganglion, the Holley carburetor and the Haller's organ, which is in part a radiant heat sensor that aids in directional host-finding.

Another critter with an unusual organ is the opossum.

The opossum is a lovable denizen of the Americas whose only handicap is it screams at its backside and gets caught in garbage cans, which are oddities more common among two-legged deranged drifters. Although you may be a frequent reader of this journal, it is quite possible you have never given possums a second thought. This is sad.

Scientists tell us possums perform an important function in nature by eating ticks, sometimes to the tune of 5,500 ticks each week. Or maybe they don't. You see, there is a competing narrative that says the possum is being given undue credit for eating ticks when it doesn't really eat ticks at all. So let's just say possums eat 2,750 ticks a week. That's still 2,750 good reasons to keep a possum in the yard.

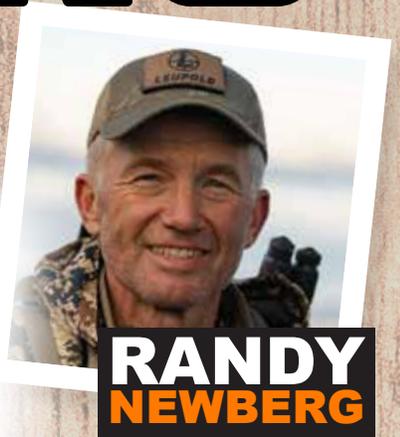
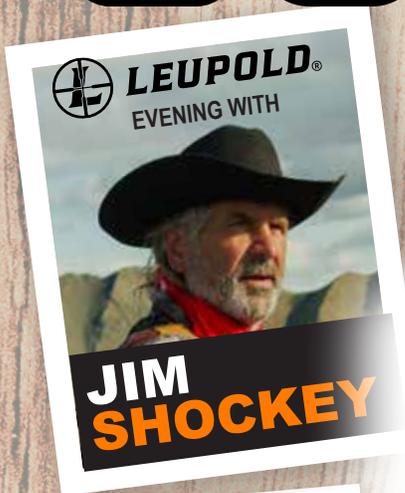
According to the Urban Dictionary, a tick can be a good-looking person or a snare drum player. Some famous snare drum players included Baby Dodds, Clyde Stubblefield, Michael Shrieve, Jojo Mayer, Carl Palmer and Snap Crackle Haynes, who was voted one of the best dressed men in America in 1960. And the Urban Dictionary says a possum could refer to a male human being who is attractive. You see how confusing this is. You could potentially have a possum in your posse who may or may not have rhythm.

In any case we are recommending you keep a tick-eating critter. Other animals that supposedly eat ticks include alpacas, guinea fowl, fire ants, frogs, monkeys, chickens, flickers, wolf spiders and squirrels. I do not recommend keeping flickers or squirrels, which are just as likely to bury ticks as eat them. And they won't find them later, but dang sure you will.

When I took my most recent tick in for analysis, I had to wait 10 days for results. Apparently, I was bitten by a newly discovered type of tick that lives in and around the mouths of alpacas. The results came back negative, which makes me the master of the post-alpaca-lip-tick universe.



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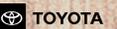
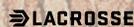
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